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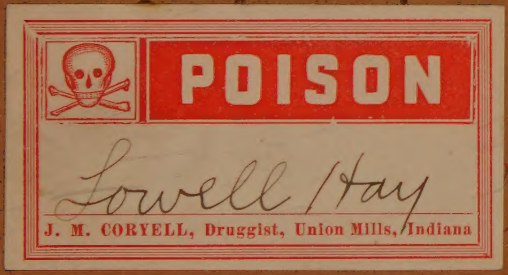

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SELECTED POEMS AND SONGS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

PHILO MELVYN BUCK, JR.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, WILLIAM MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL
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The simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart;
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire;
Hers all the melting thrill, and hers the kindling fire.

—Burns's Motto.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION PAGE

ROBERT BURNS xv

SCOTCH MINSTRELSY xlvi

PRONUNCIATION lii

BIBLIOGRAPHY lv

POEMS, EPISTLES, &c.

Tam o' Shanter 1

The Jolly Beggars 8

Halloween 20

The Cotter's Saturday Night 29

The Holy Fair 35

The Twa Dogs 43

The Brigs of Ayr 52

The Vision 60

The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie 69

Poor Mailie's Elegy 71

Death and Doctor Hornbook 73

A Dream 79

Address to the Deil 82

Address to the Unco Guid 87

Holy Willie's Prayer 89

Epistle to a Young Friend 93

PAGE
A Winter Night 96
Scotch Drink 99
Elegy on Capt. Matthew Henderson 103
The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie 108
To a Mouse 113
Man was made to Mourn 115
To a Mountain Daisy 118
On a Scotch Bard, gone to the West Indies 120
On the Late Capt. Grose's Peregrinations 122
The Humble Petition of Bruar Water 124
To a Haggis 127
Address to the Toothache 129
To a Louse 130
Lines written in Friars-Carse Hermitage 132
A Bard's Epitaph 134
Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet 135
Epistle to John Lapraik 141
To the Same (John Lapraik) 146
To William Simpson 150
To the Rev. John M'Math 158
To James Smith 160
Answer to the Guidwife of Wauchope 167
Epistle to Hugh Parker 169
To Dr. Blacklock 171
Epistle to Col. de Peyster 173
Winter (a Dirge) 174
A Prayer in the Prospect of Death 175
A Prayer, under the Pressure of Anguish 176
Elegy on the Death of Robert Ruisseaux 177
Lines on an Interview with Lord Daer 178
The Farewell 179

PAGE
On seeing a Wounded Hare 180
Epitaph on Holy Willie 181
On Stirling 182
Lines written on a Window at the King's Arms, Dumfries . 182
Lines written at Loudon Manse 183
The Toad-eater 183
Epitaph on his Father 183

SONGS AND BALLADS

Mary Morison 184
My Love is like a Red Red Rose 185
Afton Water 186
Go fetch to me a Pint o' Wine 187
Highland Mary 187
To Mary in Heaven 188
My Nannie O 190
Ae Fond Kiss 191
My Nannie's awa 192
Ye Banks an' Braes o' Bonnie Doon 193
Of a' the Airts 194
There was a Lad was born in Kyle 195
Green grow the Rashes O 196
For a' That, and a' That 197
Auld Lang Syne 198
Scots wha hae 199
It was a' for our Rightfu' King 200
Macpherson's Farewell 202
Wandering Willie 203
Braw Braw Lads 203
Ca' the Yowes 204
John Anderson, my Jo 205
The Birks of Aberfeldy 206

PAGE

O, wert thou in the Cauld Blast 207
My Heart's in the Highlands 207
Banks of Devon 208
The Gloomy Night 209
The Braes o' Ballochmyle 210
Tibbie, I hae seen the Day 210
Tam Glen 212
Contented wi' Little 213
Whistle, and I'll come to you, my Lad 214
Open the door to me, oh 214
My ain Kind Dearie O, ... 215
O, for Ane an' Twenty, Tam 216
Song of Death 217
Kenmure's on and awa 217
How Lang and Dreary 218
Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut 219
The De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman 220
Does Haughty Gaul 220
Fareweel to a' our Scottish Fame 221
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary 222
Blythe and Merry 223
Fairest Maid on Devon Banks 224
Last May a braw Wooer 225
Country Lassie 226
Hey for a Lass wi' a Tocher 228
The Highland Lassie 228
Bessy and her Spinnin' Wheel 230
But lately seen 231
Wilt thou be my Dearie? 232
Tho' Cruel Fate 232
On Cessnock Banks 233
O lay thy Loof in mine, Lass 235

PAGE

Coming through the Rye 236
Ye Jacobites by Name 236
O, were I on Parnassus' Hill 237
The Lovely Lass of Inverness 238
My Hoggie 239
Handsome Nell — 'O, once I lov'd a Bonnie Lass' . . . 240

NOTES 243
GLOSSARY 291
INDEX OF FIRST LINES 315
INDEX TO NOTES 319

INTRODUCTION

ROBERT BURNS

Paradoxes. — Perhaps no character in English Literature shows more paradoxes than that of the poet Robert Burns. There is only one explanation. Burns was a poet; and a poet has, as his true domain, all the emotions; and Burns was king of nearly all his realm. He glorifies his love of poetry: —

> Gie me a spark o' nature's fire,
> That's a' the learning I desire;
> Then tho' I drudge thro' dub and mire
> At plough or cart,
> My muse, tho' hamely in attire,
> May touch the heart.

But he turns on his poetry with a smile: —

> Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
> Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
> Some rhyme to court the country clash,
> An' raise a din;
> For me, an aim I never fash;
> I rhyme for fun.

He vaunts the dignity of man and poet: —

O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!

Or —

Preserve the dignity of Man,
With soul erect;
And trust the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

Then: —

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where Pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Makes hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

And pours out his vials of wrath: —

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm, an' cool,
Compar'd wi' you — O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dyke.

His hatred of certain aspects of religion are only

too well known, yet in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* he draws an affecting picture of a family dominated by stern piety. And to the Rev. John M'Math he writes: —

> All hail, Religion! Maid divine!
> Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
> Who in her rough imperfect line
> Thus daurs to name thee.

The only quality that seemed to be abiding was his ready sympathy; and yet, though he was able to spurn class distinctions, he was never able to shake off his instinctive dislike of the wealthy and aristocratic.

And when we turn from his works to his life, we are no less struck by its strangely paradoxical character. He had a soul that was constantly striving to attain to the imaginative realm of pure beauty, yet was constantly tripped by a body that was tied down to a most unpoetic occupation, in a most unpoetic community, and among most unpoetic institutions.

Birth. — Robert Burness, or Burns, as he preferred to spell it, was born, January 25, 1759, near Alloway's Auld Kirk on the Doon, not far from the town of Ayr. As it was his habit to find subjects for his poems among local associations, this ruined Kirk became the scene of the midnight revelry which nearly cost Tam o' Shanter his life.

Parents. — His father was William Burness, of Kincardineshire, a grave, genuinely pious, kindly,

and, for a peasant, deeply read, farmer, whose picture is best sketched in the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. His mother, more outspoken in her sympathy, industrious and frugal, was probably of a more romantic temperament. Her home had been in Ayrshire, and she was deeply versed in its ballads and stories. If from his father he inherited his head, from his mother he got his heart and his love of poetry. Not much need be said of his childhood and early youth. As soon as he could walk, he doubtless was assigned his share of the family burdens; and when he was fifteen, on his father's larger farm at Mount Oliphant, to which the family moved in 1766, he was doing a full man's work. He writes of this period of his life as combining "the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley slave."

Mount Oliphant. — The farming ventures of William Burness were not very profitable. Mount Oliphant was not more successful than the failure at the poet's birthplace. The landlord, who was a kindly man, died, and the estate was administered by a factor. He made the life of the poor tenants of Mount Oliphant miserable by his repeated threats. And it is undoubtedly true that this depression, aided by the unusually hard work, which brought on physical depression and sickness as well, was partly responsible for Burns's later vagaries of conduct. In his poem of *The Twa Dogs* he has given us a picture of the lot of the peasant, toiling unceasingly to eke out a mis-

erable existence, repeatedly tormented by the exactions of the hard-hearted collector.

Education. — But during the whole of this Mount Oliphant period, the father was careful to keep up the education of his two boys, Robert and Gilbert. At first a young man by the name of John Murdoch was hired by several of the farmers of the neighborhood to keep a little school for their boys. He boarded in turn with the parents, and has left us a very pleasing picture of the home life of the future poet. Robert was not thought so precocious as his brother, nor was his voice and ear for music so true. Evidently, Robert's genius was biding its time before showing any of its remarkable power. "All the mirth and liveliness were with Gilbert. Robert's countenance at that time wore generally a grave and thoughtful look." And yet this grave and thoughtful boy was to develop later into one of the most rollicking of companions.

Murdoch taught the boys care and exactness in the use of English, and it has been many times remarked that both the poet and his brother had an excellent command of English, which, to them, must have been at the beginning almost a foreign tongue, for the language of the countryside was entirely Lowland Scotch with a mixture of many Erse or Celtic words and phrases. Later the father took over the education of the boys, and with such enthusiasm was it carried on that a visitor, coming in at the

evening meal, found the family each with a spoon in one hand and a book in the other. Knowledge was sought as a hidden treasure for the power it imparted to its possessor. Among the books which Burns mentions as forming a part of their reading may be mentioned the Life of Wallace, the *Spectator*, Shakespeare, Pope's Poems, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and the poems of Allan Ramsay. These last were the poet's chief delight. He writes — "I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender or sublime, from affectation or fustian. I am convinced that I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is."

Love and Dancing School. — About this time, Burns had two experiences which, as it were, cast their shadows over the whole of his life. He first fell in love, when a lad of sixteen, with Nellie Kilpatrick, who worked next to him in the fields, and whom he celebrated in his song *Handsome Nell*. This was the beginning of his numerous love affairs which kept his heart and his pen busy until he lay on his death-bed. The other was his breaking away from the family's rigid rules of conduct and going to dancing school. His rustic manners here received a polish, and from now on he is no longer the awkward, shy, country bumpkin of his early period, but the leader in all the fun and frolic of the neighborhood.

Lochlea. — In 1777, the family moved away from

the factor's harshness to the farm of Lochlea in the parish of Tarbolton. It was an upland undulating farm on the north bank of the river Ayr with a wide outlook in both directions, toward the hills of Carrick on the south, and the wide Firth of Clyde and the islands toward the west. Here the family remained until 1784 and the death of the father. The hardships were not so great, for the younger members of the family were able now to take their full share in the labors of the farm. Robert was rapidly developing along the lines he was afterwards to follow. Perhaps not so much was actually written or composed by him, but he was gaining experiences, not all of which, however, were to his credit, or to the permanent strengthening of his character. He became the recipient of the secrets of half the lovers of the parish, had always at least one love affair of his own to keep his mind and imagination busy, and besides was gaining the acquaintance of that roving class of boisterous spirits who were afterwards to be the cause of so much of his troubles. When he was nineteen, he resolved to learn surveying in the neighboring town of Kirkoswald. Kirkoswald was a famous resort of smugglers that haunted the western coast, and there he put in much time in "swaggering riot and roaring dissipation." But still the study of mensuration went on until, unfortunately, one day in the kailyard behind the teacher's house, he met a pretty lass that set his heart on fire, and then and there, the school business

at Kirkoswald came to an abrupt end, and lovemaking became his serious occupation.

Hatred of Class Distinctions. — About this time, too, Burns began to see the viciousness of class distinctions, and conceived a hatred of the nobility that lasted all his life. He even went so far as not to allow himself to fall in love with a girl of higher or even as high a station in life as his own. All of his loves were girls poorer off than he. One of his best songs, *Mary Morison*, was addressed to a serving girl in a neighboring hamlet, a girl, too, that he wished to marry, but who, strange as it may seem, turned a deaf ear to the pleadings of the rustic muse, which had perhaps nothing better to offer than eloquent speeches. But though Burns was jealous of the rich and fortunate, he gave his best to the rude gatherings of noteless peasants, who would rest from their labors charmed by the vivacity and eloquence of his wit. His brother asserts that he nowhere shone to better advantage than at these country meetings with the poor hard-working farmers.

Irvine. — In 1781, Burns went to Irvine to learn flax dressing. The idea was a good one, for they could double their profits by raising and dressing their own flax. But his disappointment in not having won the love of the heroine of *Mary Morison* sent him out with a heavy heart, and ready to mix with any society that promised a forgetfulness of his heart-burning. And of such society there was an abundance

in the little seaport town of Irvine. Smugglers, adventurers, and roisterers swarmed its streets, and with them Burns early allied himself. Burns was easily led into rough living and deep drinking, and before he knew it, he had committed faults which before he had regarded with horror. Nor was Burns more successful in the trade he had chosen. His partner ruined him in business, and on the night of a New Year's carousal, his shop was burned to the ground; and, impaired in purse and spirits, he fled to his home in Lochlea, only to find misfortunes gathering around his family and his father on his death-bed.

The Father's Death. — The father died in 1784, and as his last hours came on, he said that there was one of his children of whose future he could not think without fear. Robert, who was in the room, came up to the bedside and asked, "O father, is it me you mean?" The dying man responded that it was, and Robert, with tears streaming from his eyes, turned to the window, his bosom swelling almost to bursting with the restraint he put on himself.

Mossgiel. — A few weeks before, the brothers, foreseeing the crash in the family fortunes, had rented the small farm at Mossgiel, near Mauchline, about two or three miles from Lochlea. When the father died, it was only by claiming their arrears of wages that they were able to save a small remnant of the family possessions from their creditors. They stocked their new farm and settled on it early in 1784. Burns

entered on it with a firm resolution to be sober, industrious, and thrifty. But two ruined crops were too much for his good resolutions, and he went back to his old ways. There are three things that marked his two years at Mossgiel: his final acceptance of his mission as the poet of the lowly; his love affair with Jean Armour and its unfortunate termination; and his enthusiastic entry into the quarrel between the New and the Auld Licht clergy. Yet it will be hard when treating of them to keep them separate, for they are most intimately associated and throw light on each other.

Poetry. — The years 1785 and 1786 were his *anni mirabiles*. With the exception of *Tam o' Shanter*, and his songs, during these years he produced nearly all of his best-known poems, his strange, self-revealing epistles, and his tirades against the established Kirk. He had learned the lesson that he was not to be a farmer, and even though he plied his *countra wark*, his heart was elsewhere, and while his hand was on the plough, his imagination and ready sympathy were busy composing *Halloween*, *To a Mouse*, *The Jolly Beggars*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *The Address to the Deil*, *The Auld Farmer's Salutation*, *The Vision*, *The Twa Dogs*, *The Mountain Daisy*, *Death and Dr. Hornbook*.

Hitherto, Burns's life had been without an aim, but now it was filled with the inspiration of Scotch poetry. The dawning hope had begun to gladden

him that he might be able to do something for the sake of his country, and take his place among the Scotch bards of antiquity that have created the atmosphere of minstrelsy which envelops and glorifies their native country. This hope and aim is recorded in an entry in his Commonplace Book, of the probable date of August, 1784: —

"However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Fergusson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, and haughs, immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, — the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants — a country where civil, and particularly religious liberty, have ever found their first support, and their last asylum — a country, the birthplace of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious Wallace, the saviour of his country — yet we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes of Ayr and the healthy mountainous source and winding sweep of Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy; but, alas! I am far unequal to the

task, both in native genius and in education. Obscure I am, obscure I must be, though no young poet nor young soldier's heart ever beat more fondly for fame than mine."

The same wish he again worded in verse in his *Epistle to the Guidwife of Wauchope House.* When the world looked dark without, and doubt and fear assailed from within, he unburdened his soul to his muse, and at that time always found comfort: —

> Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
> My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
> At hame, a-fiel', at wark, at leisure,
> The Muse, poor hizzie!
> Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
> She's seldom lazy.

The little room in which Burns did most of the transcribing of his poems, for he composed them mostly afield, is thus described by Chambers: —

"The farm-house of Mossgiel, which still exists almost unchanged since the days of the poet, is very small, consisting of only two rooms, a *but* and a *ben* as they are called in Scotland. Over these, reached by a trap stair, is a small garret, in which Robert and his brother used to sleep. Thither, when he had returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire, and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields. His favorite

time for composition was at the plough. Long years afterwards, his sister, Mrs. Begg, used to tell how when her brother had gone forth again to field work, she would steal up to the garret and search the drawer of the deal table for the verses which Robert had newly transcribed."

The Auld and the New Licht Clergy. — Shortly after his retirement to Mossgiel the poet had begun to take his part in the theological differences which separated the *Auld Licht* from the *New Licht* clergy. The grounds for this quarrel are now fortunately dead, but at that time they were very live to all in Scotland. The *Auld Lichts* were the strict Calvinistic, John Knox, party who wished not only to enforce the theological doctrines of preordination, but wished to carry into the government of the state the strict maxims of the Geneva community. They prohibited all such observances as May Day and Easter jollifications, looked askance at any frolics like the Hallowe'en, and pried minutely into even the inner life of the individual. It was the party that had marred the old church architecture of Scotland, had frowned on Scotch music, and had well-nigh banished everything beautiful and poetic in the lives of the people. But it was the party that had given Scotland its strength of character and intellect, had carefully nourished education, and on all but spiritual lines had carefully fostered the native spirit of democracy. The *New Lichts* were a protest against the theological rigidness

of the old party. They were more tolerant about the amusements of the people, and were anxious to arouse again the old Scotch beauty of character and art that shone so brightly before the Reformation.

Naturally, Burns, the ardent lover of beauty and joy, would early place himself on the side of what he thought the party of progress. At first he is merely an onlooker, and his first poems that touch the subject, as his *Epistle to William Simpson*, treat the whole subject as a "moonshine matter." Soon, however, it was to grow very serious with him, for he was to feel the lash of the church. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." Burns was not without his faults that exposed him to the wrath of the Kirk, and he dared to cast his stone. It rebounded and well nigh crushed him.

But this is to anticipate. Sometime in 1785, his friend, Gavin Hamilton, an attorney of Mauchline, was tried before the Kirk Sessions for whistling on the Sabbath or some such venal offence, and Burns came to his aid with satire, song, and epistle — *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *The Twa Herds*, *The Holy Fair*. The countryside was rolling in laughter. Hamilton was acquitted, but the Kirk began to look over their artillery to see if they could in any way bring down the scapegrace of a poet who was holding them and their ways up to such ridicule, and Burns himself furnished the ammunition.

Jean Armour. — Sometime in 1785, Burns had

fallen in love with Jean Armour, the daughter of a respectable master mason in the village of Mauchline. Burns in 1786 gave her a certificate of marriage, which according to the Scottish law made their union legal. But the irascible father, not relishing the thought of such a roisterer as the poet for a son-in-law, tore up the document and turned the law loose on the offending swain. Even Jean was, by some means unknown, compelled to give up her lover, and sent to Paisley, where in September she gave birth to twins. Naturally, Burns was deeply offended by the, as he thought, unreasonable father, and especially by the light-hearted Jean. He broke out against law, order, and society. The Kirk, too, took a hand in the proceedings and made the young couple do penance before the whole congregation, according to its rigid laws, very much as Hester was punished in *The Scarlet Letter*.

The Kilmarnock Edition. — Almost insane from mortification and rage against his enemies, Burns took refuge in another love affair and determined to leave the country. He made over his share in the farm to his brother and was about to sail for Jamaica to make his home among unknown scenes and there cherish his wounded heart. To pay for the expenses of the journey, he published by subscription the first edition of his poems at Kilmarnock. While he was hiding in the houses of his friends (July, 1786), trying to escape the officers of justice set on his heels by the angry Armour, his little book of poems was published.

Highland Mary. — Early in the spring of that year the poet had met Highland Mary, Mary Campbell. In the troubles that afflicted him at the time, the vows of eternal faithfulness, that he swore to her, no doubt contributed their share. Very little of a definite nature is known of her. They parted swearing to meet again and she went to her home in Argyllshire. Her Bible is still preserved, inscribed with his vow. He addressed to her some of his best songs, as *Will you go to the Indies, My Mary.* She was on her way to Greenock, where she was to meet him before he sailed in October, but was stricken with a malignant fever and died. Her memory seemed always to haunt him, for some years after, on the anniversary of her death, he wrote his magnificent *To Mary in Heaven.*

In the meanwhile he was pushing forward his plans to sail for the Indies. His passage was paid for and he was waiting for the vessel to sail. He had written his many farewell poems and had retired to Greenock to compose *The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast*, his last farewell to his native land, when the unexpected happened. The success of his poems and a letter from Dr. Blacklock in Edinburgh completely altered his plans, and he went to Edinburgh.

Edinburgh. — Dr. Blacklock belonged to the select literary coterie of Edinburgh, and a letter of praise from him fell like a ray of sunshine on the heart of the poet. He says, "The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope."

His poetry, too, had made him other influential friends. He began a correspondence with Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, which continued till his death. But even more important for his immediate fortunes was his meeting with Professor Dugald Stewart of the University of Edinburgh. These influential friends all urged a second edition of his poems and no place was more fitting for such an undertaking than the Scotch capital.

Journey to Edinburgh. — His journey to Edinburgh was a triumphal progress. Mr. Prentice thus described his entertainment at a farm-house, which was typical of the receptions which were henceforth to await Burns wherever his coming was known: —

"All the farmers in the parish had read the poet's then published works, and were anxious to see him. They were all asked to meet him at a late dinner, and the signal of his arrival was to be a white sheet attached to a pitchfork, and put on the top of a cornstack in the barnyard. The parish is a beautiful amphitheatre, with the Clyde winding through it — Wellbrae Hill to the west, Tinto Hill and the Culter Fells to the south, and the pretty, green, conical hill, Quothquan Law, to the east. My father's stackyard, lying in the centre, was seen from every house in the parish. At length Burns arrived, mounted on a borrowed pownie. Instantly was the white flag hoisted, and as instantly were seen the farmers issuing from their houses, and converging to the point of meeting. A glorious evening, or rather night, which borrowed something from

the morning, followed, and the conversation of the poet confirmed and increased the admiration created by his writings. On the following morning he breakfasted with a large party at the next farm-house, tenanted by James Stodart; . . . took lunch with a large party at the bank in Carnwath, and rode into Edinburgh that evening on the pownie, which he returned to the owner in a few days afterwards by John Samson, the brother of the immortal *Tam.*"

Reception in Edinburgh. — Burns reached Edinburgh on the 28th of November, 1786. He took up his residence with an old friend, John Richmond, in a humble lodge on a side street. There he lived the whole of the first winter, and from there he went forth into the best society of the capital. He became the lion of the hour. There was not a person of importance in Scotland whom he did not meet. The "stately politicians" and "high-born ladies" all fell under the magic spell of his ready wit and charming conversation.

His Appearance. — It is interesting to catch glimpses of Burns as he appeared to those with whom he came into contact. The descriptions that follow are by Mr. Walker and Dugald Stewart: —

"I was not much struck by his first appearance. His person, though strong and well-knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His motions were firm and decided, and,

though without grace, were at the same time so free from clownish constraint as to show that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast which is most frequent among the upper ranks, but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind. . . . He was plainly but properly dressed, in a style midway between the holiday costume of a farmer and that of the company with which he now associated. His black hair, without powder at a time when it was generally worn, was tied behind, and spread upon his forehead. Had I met him near a seaport, I should have conjectured him to be the master of a merchant vessel. . . . In no part of his manner was there the slightest affectation; nor could a stranger have suspected, from anything in his behaviour or conversation, that he had been for some months the favourite of all the fashionable circles of the metropolis. In conversation he was powerful. His conceptions and expressions were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from commonplaces. Though somewhat authoritative, it was in a way which gave little offence, and was readily imputed to his inexperience in those modes of smoothing dissent and softening assertion, which are important characteristics of polished manners."

"The attentions he received from all ranks and descriptions of persons would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I perceived any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity which had struck me so forcibly when first I saw him in the country, nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintances. He walked with me in spring, early in the morning, to the Braid Hills, when he charmed me still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and he once told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and worth which they contained. . . . The idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. All his faculties were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous, and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. I should have pronounced him fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen. . . . The remarks he made on the characters of men were shrewd and pointed, though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise

of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant. . . . His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding; but, to my taste, not often pleasing or happy."

Walter Scott was a boy when he met him, but has left this interesting note, "His eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally glowed) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw another such eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time."

His Poise. — At the same time, though a social lion, Burns never forgot that these favors were only temporary, that he was only the latest fad, and that he must look to the future. His own measure of himself was not raised by his success, and he knew that when Edinburgh was through playing with him, he would once more be thrown on his own resources. He hoped through some friend to gain a post in the excise, a thing that did come to him a year or two later through Mr. Graham of Fintry.

His Humble Friends. — It is interesting also to note that he never forgot his feeling of good-fellowship for those who were born in the lower walks of life. Much of his Edinburgh time was put in with his humbler friends in some ale-house away from the homes of the nobility. And even after he returned home, he was the same Robbie Burns, the boon companion, to his old associates and acquaintances. There was never

any one easier to get acquainted with for high or low, and easier to have the acquaintance ripen into friendship.

The Effect of the Edinburgh Experience. — But if there is one thing that stands out as a result of this first winter in Edinburgh, it was a strengthening of his old dislike and jealousy of the nobility. He realized his true position with them, and as a result, he broke out in the following words in his diary in April, 1787: —

" For these reasons, I am determined to make these pages my confidant. I will sketch every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, without feud or favor. . . . I think a lock and key a security at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever. My own private story likewise, my love adventures, my rambles; the frowns and smiles of fortune on my bardship; my poems and fragrants, that must never see the light, shall be occasionally inserted. In short, never did four shillings purchase so much friendship, since confidence went first to the market, or honesty was set up for sale. . . .

" There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin, than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received everywhere, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets: I imagine a man of

abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving honour to whom honour is due; he meets at a great man's table a Squire Something or a Sir Somebody; he knows the noble landlord at heart gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes, beyond, perhaps, any one at the table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow whose abilities would scarcely have made an eightpenny tailor, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice that are withheld from the son of genius and poverty!

"The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention, engrossing attention, one day, to the only blockhead at table (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunder-pate, and myself), that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance, but he shook my hand and looked so benevolently good at parting, God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him to my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues."

The Edinburgh Edition of his Poems. — Near the end of April, 1787, the object of his visit to Edinburgh was accomplished. The second edition of his poems was very successful. It had been published by Creech, the first publisher in the city, and had been subscribed to by the best in the land. Copies even found their

way into England and were read by the poet Cowper, Pitt, the Prime Minister, and others of note. The proceeds from the sale amounted to £500, but, unfortunately, it was not Creech's way to settle promptly. He kept Burns waiting for the payments, and in the meantime the poet must live, and yet he was prevented from getting into any settled profession for the want of funds.

Visit to the Border. — In the interim, Burns took a trip through the Border, made famous in song and ballad, and which Scott has made known to all Europe. There is little of interest to chronicle of this trip. At its close, Burns was back again at Mossgiel and welcomed by his old neighbors and family. He writes of his disgust at the servility of the Armours, who now were proud to boast their acquaintance with the poet. His love for Jean, however, revived, and a year later, when he returned from his second Edinburgh visit, he made her his wife.

The Highlands. — He now started out with William Nicol for a trip through the Highlands. At one place, he was on the point of meeting Dundas, the fount of patronage in Scotland, but was forced to go on by the stupid obstinacy of his companion. He visited Stirling, Culloden Muir, and many other places that are redolent of the romance of the exiled Stuarts. All his native patriotic fire was aroused and he became an ardent Jacobite. This was unfortunately not worldly wisdom, when we remember that the reigning

royal family had put down two uprisings in favor of the last of the Stuarts, and that all preferment in the Excise must come through their countenance. But while we thus condemn the poet's understanding, we cannot but admire his fearless championship of a lost cause.

Edinburgh Again. — In the winter of 1787 he was back again in Edinburgh, but this time neglected by the gentry. They had grown tired of his open excesses, and now knew that he kept a terrible note-book in which all their faults and foibles were faithfully set down. However, he was able at last to come to a settlement with Creech, and to return to his home with more money than he had ever dreamed of before. He at once gave his brother £180, married Jean Armour, and rented the farm of Ellisland, near Dumfries.

The result of his Edinburgh trips, his bitterness against his social superiors, comes out in a letter he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop shortly after his settlement in Ellisland.

" When I skulk into a corner lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim, ' What merits has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some previous state of existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the keys of riches in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride? ' . . . Often as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp

of Princes Street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his own consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a prospect-glass."

The Excise Office and Ellisland. — At about the same time (1789), he secured a position in the Excise at £50 a year. He now had a double task: to look after a large farm, that was, to say the least, productive of little more than trouble, and to ride some two hundred miles a week on his business of collecting revenue from all engaged in brewing or in the manufacture of spirits. He looked on the last task as an undignified thing for a poet, but his family must be supported and no other way offered itself. "Many stories are told of his leniency to the country folk who sometimes transgressed. At Thornhill, on a fair day, he was seen to call at the door of a poor woman who for the day was doing a little illicit business on her own account. A nod and a movement of the forefinger brought the woman to the doorway. 'Kate, are you mad? Don't you know that the supervisor and I will be in upon you in forty minutes?' Burns at once disappeared among the crowd and the poor woman was saved a heavy fine."— SHAIRP.

Songs and Tam o' Shanter. — During this period he is chiefly busied in the composition of Scotch songs for Johnson's *Musical Museum*, and later for Thom-

son's *Collection*. He undertook these as a sacred patriotic duty; and it is something to the credit of his patriotism, if not of his worldly wisdom, that he refused any payment for his services. The only long poem he composed now was the inimitable *Tam o' Shanter*, and the story of its composition as told by Mrs. Burns is interesting as it reveals his methods of setting to such a task.

"Her husband had spent most of the day by the riverside, and in the afternoon she joined him with her two children. He was busily engaged crooning to himself; and Mrs. Burns, perceiving that her presence was an interruption, loitered behind with her little ones among the broom. Her attention was presently attracted by the strange and wild gesticulations of the bard, who was now seen at some distance, agonized with an ungovernable access of joy. He was reciting very loud, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, those animated verses which he had just conceived, —

> "Now Tam! O Tam! had thae been queans,
> A' plump and strappin' in their teens.

"'I wish ye had seen him,' said his wife; 'he was in such ecstasy that the tears were happing down his cheeks.'" — SHAIRP.

His Religion. — His letters to Mrs. Dunlop at this time give his feelings better than any words of ours.

On New Year's Day, 1789, he writes to her: "I

own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery. This day — the first Sunday of May — a breezy, blue-skied noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn — these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday. . . . We know nothing, or next to nothing of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that we should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which on minds of a different cast makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the fox-glove, the wild-briar rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something

within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities — a God that made all things — man's immaterial and immortal nature — and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave!"

And again, in the same year: ". . . In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but when I reflected that I was opposing the most ardent wishes, and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief, in all ages, I was shocked at my own conduct."

Dumfries. — But Ellisland was a bad bargain. He applied for and secured the position of Excise officer in the neighboring town of Dumfries. This was a little town fairly swarming with wild spirits who would soon find in Burns a congenial soul. He was not allowed any leisure for his poetical works. Visitors were constantly demanding his company and wit at the table, and alas, what was of supreme importance to the poet, his sobriety and time. In him periods of hilarity and depression succeeded each other with alarming frequency. He writes to Mrs. Dunlop: —

"Alas! who would wish for many years? What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery, like the gloom which blots out the stars, one by one from the face of heaven, and leaves us without a ray of comfort in the howling waste?"

And again to Alexander Cunningham: "Canst thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Of late, a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times, — losses which, though trifling, were what I could ill bear, — have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition. — Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. A heart at ease would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the Gospel. . . . Still there are two great pillars that bear us up amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The one is composed of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of Courage, Fortitude, Magnanimity. The other is made up of those feelings and sentiments which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast may disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul, those senses of the mind — if I may be allowed the expression — which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities — an all-powerful and equally beneficent God, and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat,

while a ray of hope beams on the field: the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure."

The French Revolution. — It was a period of rapid decadence, and the sooner we pass over it, the better. His admiration of the French Revolutionists got him into trouble with his superiors. But there was a flash of his old spirit before his death. In 1795, when France threatened invasion, a company of volunteers was organized at Dumfries. Burns was enrolled among the number. For this occasion he wrote the magnificent — *Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat?* — and the whole country rang with his song.

But he was near his end. He saw the approach of death. He feared for his reputation after his death, for he knew that every scrap of his writing would be unearthed and published. And it is one of the keenest of regrets to all right-minded lovers of Burns that this has actually been done by a mistaken sense of love for the poet. If our infirmities could only be buried with us!

His Last Illness. — In his last illness, he was attended only by a neighbor, Jessie Lewars, for whom he composed that most beautiful of pathetic songs: *O, wert thou in the Cauld Blast.*

Death. — His wife was unable to attend him, and four helpless children wandered from room to room, gazing on their helpless parents. On the 21st of July, 1796, Burns sank into his last sleep.

Burns has drawn best his own portrait. Keats has said: —

"We can see horribly clearly in the works of such a man his whole life, as if we were God's spies."

The best study of Burns is Burns.

SCOTCH MINSTRELSY

Burns no Innovator. — Burns has often been spoken of as an innovator; the usher, as it were, of that remarkable "return to nature" poetry that reached its climax in the works of Wordsworth. But Burns was no prophet of a new creed. He was always an imitator, but an imitator who imposed so much of his own personality on his productions that very little comparison can be made between him and his predecessors.

Decay of the Scotch Language and Literature. — The union of Scotland with England in 1603 and the final disappearance of all traces of a national government in 1707 destroyed all hope of a separate Scotch literature. Before 1603 there had been many poets and writers in the national language, but after that date the language sank into a dialect, and all Scotchmen with any literary aspirations thought only of writing in English. Besides, to this cause of the decay of a purely Scotch national literature must be added the fierce theological discussions which raged in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, when every man with intellectual ability was drawn into

the conflict. Poetry, which may be called the soul of literature, could not live in such an atmosphere, and so we notice that, when there was a new awakening of the Scotch literary spirit in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the product was very different from the poems of Lindesay and Gawain Douglas, who wrote in the sixteenth.

Ballads. — But during this period of gloom in Scotland the love of the people for the old songs and ballads never waned. And though no great poets arose to make new songs, the old ones were carefully cultivated. There were two notes to this folk poetry that were to go far toward modifying the correct English taste of the eighteenth century: one of which was to show itself chiefly in the works of Burns and later in Wordsworth; the other in the works of Scott. They were the close touch with nature, and the love of romanticism, that is, of deeds of heroism and of a past age. Many of these old ballads, such as *Sir Patrick Spens*, and the poems of the Border, have since become common property of the English-speaking world; but at that time they were sung only by the poorer people, old farmers and herdsmen, as they went about their little tasks.

The Jacobite Rebellions. — In the eighteenth century, however, a series of events took place which, at least for a few years, gave Scotland a feeling of national independence it had not known for two hundred years. It was the chivalrous feeling of loyalty

for the exiled House of Stuart, which burned so fiercely in the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745. And the punishments suffered by the martyrs for the Cause gave just that romantic, sentimental feeling that breaks out so easily into song.

It is in the eighteenth century, then, that we first catch a glimpse of the reviving spirit of Scotch poetry, Scotch national and vernacular poetry, caused by the two forces at work: the popular love of ballad music and the national spirit of loyalty to the exiled royal family.

Popular Poetry. — This spirit broke out into song and poems descriptive of Scotch life. As the upper classes of society had abandoned the dialect and had patterned their ways of life and thought after the English, it is to the lower we must look for this new minstrelsy. It is almost solely in their dialect and occupied with their life and feelings. To this class Burns belonged, and he marks the climax of Scotch popular poetry. It is absurd, then, to say that Burns began the movement for a "return to nature." Scotch poetry never had gotten away from nature. It had nowhere else to lay its head.

William Hamilton. — Perhaps it would not be unprofitable to trace the course of Scotch poetry in the eighteenth century to its climax in Burns. In 1706, James Watson began his *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems*. These were drawn largely from the popular songs and poems of the seventeenth

and earlier centuries. Many of them furnished Burns with examples for some of his best. Some of the poems of William Hamilton of Gilbertfield were in this collection; one of which, *The Death and Dying Words of Bonie Heck, a Famous Greyhound*, was the original of the *Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie, a Pet Yowe.*

Allan Ramsay. — More important was Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), a poor Lanarkshire boy. He became a wig-maker and bookseller of Edinburgh, and while there, devoted part of his time to poetry. He worked the vein of old Scotch poetry. In 1724 his collection of " Scots Poems wrote by the Ingenious before 1600 " was published in the *Evergreen.* In 1724–1727, he brought out the *Tea Table Miscellany*, a collection of old and new songs; and the *Gentle Shepherd*, a pastoral drama. All of these became instantly popular. Like Burns, Ramsay wrote both in Scotch and English in his poems, but the Scotch is the more natural as it is his own tongue and was spoken about him.

Robert Fergusson. — Ramsay was followed by Robert Fergusson (1750–1774), the young lawyer's clerk who died when he was barely twenty-four. His life of hardship and toil mixed with the bright light of poetry and the fierce fires of intemperance reminds us of the life of Burns. He died, too, before he could hope to achieve the success his genius promised. But the few Scotch poems he wrote show his knowledge of city and suburban life, and his love of his subjects.

He, too, has Burns's love of humor and of satire. In these respects he may be said to have been Burns's most immediate predecessor.

Scotch Music. — But perhaps Burns is even better known by his songs than by his poems, great as many of them are. It is too late now in the world's history to praise the Scotch popular music, but we can review very briefly its development. It is mainly Celtic in its origin, and was played first on the pipe. At first, it had only five notes, and was our modern diatonic scale without the fourth and seventh. A familiar example of it is found in the melody of *Auld Lang Syne*.[1] It lends itself readily to minor strains, and this is why so much of even humorous Scotch song has in it a touch of pathos. The introduction of the violin and the influence of church music gradually filled out the scale and gave the composers more room in which to exercise their skill. But the pipe kept its hold on the people, though the fiddle became the instrument that stirred the native blood at the barn dances.

These melodies became exceedingly popular and gradually got to themselves varieties of words. Thus the *Lady Cassilis' Lilt* became the plaintive *Bonnie House o' Airlie*, *The Land o' the Leal*, and the martial

[1] This scale may be played on the piano by using only the black keys. Any order of the notes will make a melody. To reproduce the sound of the pipes it is only necessary to play in the bass the G flat and the D flat, and in the treble the black keys in any order. The bass then gives the sound of the drones and the treble that of the chanter.

Scots Wha Hae. Even during the terrible days of the Covenant when men were shedding each other's blood on account of religious differences, and when all avenues of poetic expression seemed choked, the common people kept their hearts warm singing these old national melodies in defiance of church and theological strife.

Most of the songs which come down to us from this period are anonymous. Some, like *Muirland Willie*, *Waly, Waly up the Bank*, are of the ballad type. From these Burns drew generously when he came to write his own songs. They furnished him not only models, but subjects; as, *Tam Glen*, *Gala Water*, *Wanderin' Willie*. From some, he took only the melodies; as, *Will ye Go to the Yowe Buchts*, *Marion*, became *Will ye Go to the Indies, my Mary*. Some, like *Annie Laurie*, were left to other hands to develop.

The Jacobite rebellions of 1689, 1715, and 1745 furnished a new impulse for Scotch songs, and these, Burns reworked in his songs. Some of the best known of these are — *Lady Keith's Lament*, *Hey Johnie Cope*, *Charlie He's my Darling*, which are well known to-day.

Ramsay wrote a number of songs and dressed up a number of old ones. But the greatest number of Scotch songs, even in the eighteenth century, remained anonymous. The first careful collection of them was made in 1770–1776, by Herd; Johnson's and Thomson's collections, which were begun in Burns's lifetime,

were largely successful through the painstaking work of the poet himself.

PRONUNCIATION

The Northern Dialect. — The Scotch dialect as we have it to-day is the last trace of the Anglian of old Northumbria. Anglo-Saxon England was divided into three chief kingdoms: Northumbria (including the Scotch Lowlands), Mercia, and Wessex. There was a corresponding difference in dialect. In the eleventh century, Lowland Scotland separated itself from England, and this northern dialect became the national language of the people. In the meanwhile, with the rise in importance of London and of the University cities of Oxford and Cambridge, the Midland dialect became the literary language of England. Thus in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, we have the two distinct national literatures of England and Scotland, one in the Northern, and one in the Midland dialect.

In 1603, the union of England and Scotland made London the literary capital of both countries. And the Scotch, which up to that time had been a literary language, was degraded into the position of an inferior dialect. From then to the time of the middle of the eighteenth century, no literary works were composed in Scotch. For this reason we have no fixed spelling or pronunciation of the words which were used only by the peasants in their ordinary conversation. The

language spoken near Edinburgh differed quite considerably from that spoken on the west coast where Burns lived. And that spoken near the Highlands was so mixed with the Celtic as to make it practically a foreign language.

The vowels and consonants for this reason have no fixed quantity, and our spelling of the words is at best an approximation to the sound. If we try to read Burns, giving the English values to the vowels and consonants, we find that we destroy almost every trace of a rhyme.

The following are the more common sounds given to the vowels and unusual consonants as we find them in his poems: —

Vowels. — *A*. 1. Pronounced like *a* in *far*. It may be long, as in *warld*, or short, as in *wark*. NOTE. — The sound is sometimes represented by the diphthong *au*, as in *waur*.

2. It has also the sound of *ey* in *they*; for example, *wale*. NOTE. — This sound is sometimes represented by the diphthong *ai*, as in *mair*; sometimes by *ae*, as in *sae*; and sometimes by *ai*, as in *plaith*.

(The sound of *a* in *man* is never found in Scotch.)

E. 1. Like the *e* in *then*; for example, *het*.

2. Like the *e* in *bee*. NOTE. — This sound is usually represented by the *ee* or by *ie* or *ei*; for example, *weel*, *deil*, and *spier*.

I and *Y*. These two vowels are almost interchangeable.

1. The commonest sound is that of *i* in *bird;* for example, *rin.*

2. In some words it has the value of *i* in *din;* for example, *mither.*

3. Sometimes it represents a combination of *a* in *fate* and *e* in *fee;* for example, *whayles.* NOTE. — Occasionally we have the long *i* of *mind;* for example, *kye.* The final *ie* has the same sound as in English; for example, *bonnie.*

O. This has but the one sound of the *o* in the English *bore.* It may be long, as in *lore,* or short, as in *bonnie.*

U. There are two values for this vowel.

1. A sound similar to the English *u* in *fun;* for example, *busk.*

2. A sound very similar to the sound of the German modified *u* in *grün.* This is sometimes written *ui* or *oo;* for example, *blude, guid, broo.* (This last double *o* sound is sometimes pronounced as *oo* in *moon.*)

AE and *AI* have the sound of *e* in *they.*

EI and *IE* have the sound of *e* in *bee.*

EY has the sound of *a* in *fate* combined with the *e* in *bee.*

OO has the sound of *oo* in *moon.*

OU has a sound similar to the above and is sometimes written *ui.* Cf. *bluid,* which is also written *blude.*

Consonants. — 1. *H,* excepting in English words like *honor,* is strongly aspirated.

2. *R* is always rolled. Sometimes this even adds an extra syllable.

3. *NG*, pronounced as *ng* in German *langer*.

4. *CH* and *GH*, always strongly aspirated as gutturals; for example, *brought* is pronounced *brocht* and *rough* pronounced *roch*.

Terminations. — 1. *ED* is always pronounced *it* or *et* and is often so spelled.

2. *ING* is always pronounced with the sound nearly approaching the old form *and* with the *d* silent. For this reason, Burns in his dialect pieces rarely prints the final *g*.

3. *URE* is always pronounced as the *ure* in *picture*.

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SELECTED POEMS AND SONGS OF ROBERT BURNS

BURNS'S POEMS

TAM O' SHANTER

"Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke."
— GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies° leave the street,
And drouthy neibors neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter —
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A bletherin', blusterin', drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;

That ilka melder° wi' the miller
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin' fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.
Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!
But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,° that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter,
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.
Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,

The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!
  But pleasures are like poppies spread —
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls° in the river —
A moment white, then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,°
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time nor tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour, he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.
  The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.
  Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares.
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.
Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae,° we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd° in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle!
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance!
Nae cotillon brent° new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys,° and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast —
A touzie tyke, black, grim, and large!

To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.°
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantraip sleight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table
A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae the rape —
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.
As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linkit at it in her sark!
Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!°

Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!
But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.
But Tam kent what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and walie
That night enlisted in the core,°
Lang after kent on Carrick° shore!
(For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear.)
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie
Wi' twa pund Scots° ('twas a' her riches)
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!
But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r —
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was, and strang);
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,°
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,

Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark!
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke
When plundering herds° assail their byke,
As open pussie's° mortal foes
When pop! she starts before their nose,
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud.
So Maggie runs; the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.
Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin'!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig:°
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Each man and mother's son, take heed;

Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS. — A CANTATA

RECITATIVO

When lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or, wavering like the baukie bird,
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie gangrel° bodies
In Poosie Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies.
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping
The very girdle rang.

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy° lay within his arm;
Wi' usquebae and blankets warm,
She blinket on her sodger;
An' aye he gies the tosy° drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,

While she held up her greedy gab,
Just like an aumous dish:
Ilk smack still did crack still
Just like a cadger's whip;
Then staggering, and swaggering,
He roar'd this ditty up —

AIR

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I pass'd where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abrám:°
And I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro° low was laid at the sound of the drum.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,°
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb:
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.

And now tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet,°
As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.

What tho' with hoary locks I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home?
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of the drum.

RECITATIVO

He ended; and the kebars sheuk
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore.
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirled out *Encore!*
But up arose the martial chuck,°
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch;
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;

He ventur'd the soul, and I riskèd the body, —
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon° to the fife I was ready,
I askèd no more but a sodger laddie.

But the peace it reduced me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoiced at a sodger laddie.

And now I have liv'd — I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie!

RECITATIVO

Poor Merry Andrew° in the neuk
  Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
  Between themselves they were sae busy.
  At length, wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoitered up an' made a face;
  Then turn'd, an' laid a smack on Grizzy,
Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
  Sir Knave is a fool in a session;

He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held awa to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye hae of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck;
A hizzie's the half o' my craft;
But what could ye other expect,
Of ane that's avowedly daft?

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer;
There's even, I'm tauld, i' the Court,
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
Maks faces to tickle the mob?
He rails at our mountebank squad —
It's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For, faith! I'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
Gude Lord! he's far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterling,°
For mony a pursie she had hookit,

And had in mony a well been dookit;
Her love had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa'° the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobs, she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman: —

AIR

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lawlan' laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS

Sing hey, my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho, my braw John Highlandman!
There's no a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg° an' tartan plaid,
And gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,
And lived like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lawlan' face he fearèd nane,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

They banish'd him beyond the sea;
But ere the bud was on the tree,

Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.

But oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one!
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.

And now a widow I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on my John Highlandman.

RECITATIVO

A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha used at trysts° and fairs to driddle,
Her strappin' limb and gaucy middle
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward ee,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then, in an arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set aff, wi' allegretto glee,
His giga solo.

AIR

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,

And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
And oh! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about, till Daddie Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o't.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
And sun oursels about the dyke,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,°
Hunger and cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.

RECITATIVO

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,°
As well as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a roosty rapier —

He swoor, by a' was swearing worth,
To spit him like a pliver,
Unless he would from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly ee, poor tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the caird address'd her: —

AIR

My bonnie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation;
I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
To go and clout the cauldron.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and caperin';
And tak a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron;
And, by that stoup, my faith and houp!
And by that dear Kilbaigie,°
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.

RECITATIVO

The caird prevail'd — th' unblushing fair
  In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
  And partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
  That show'd a man o' spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
  And made the bottle clunk
    To their health that night.

He was a care-defying blade
  As ever Bacchus listed;
Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
  His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had nae wish, but to be glad,
  Nor want but when he thirsted;
He hated nought, but to be sad,
  And thus the Muse suggested
    His sang that night.

AIR

I am a bard of no regard
  Wi' gentlefolks, and a' that;
But Homer-like, the glowrin' byke,°
  Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS

For a' that, and a' that,
  And twice as meikle's a' that;

I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, and a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams!
My Helicon I ca' that.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and *Here's the sex!*
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as meikle's a' that,
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't, for a' that.

RECITATIVO

So sung the bard — and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth;
They toom'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
To quench their lowin' drouth.
Then owre again the jovial thrang

The poet did request
To lowse his pack, an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR

See the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring;
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing —

CHORUS

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.

[THE SAILOR'S SONG]

Tho' women's minds, like winter winds,
May shift, an' turn, and a' that,
The noblest breast adores them maist —
A consequence I draw that.

CHORUS

For a' that, and a' that,
An' twice as meikle's a' that;
The bonnie lass that I lo'e best,
She'll be my ain for a' that!

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.

But there is ane aboon the lave
Has wit, an' sense, and a' that;
A bonnie lass, I like her best,
An' wha a crime dare ca' that?

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft;
They've ta'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, an' *Here's the sex!*
I like the jads for a' that!

HALLOWEEN

Upon that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans° dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean° the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove, to stray an' rove

Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night;

Amang the bonnie winding banks
Where Doon rins wimplin' clear,
Where Bruce° ance ruled the martial ranks
An' shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry friendly country-folks
Together did convene
To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
An' haud their Halloween
Fu' blythe that night:

The lasses feat, an cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blythe fu' sweetly kythe
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks° maun a' be sought ance:
They steek their een, an' grape an' wale
For muckle anes an' straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the bow-kail,
An' pou'd, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow'd, that night.

Then, straught or crookèd, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The very wee things toddlin' rin —
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the custock's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

The auld guidwife's well-hoordit nits°
Are round an' round divided,
An' mony lads' an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa, wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel:
He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie,
An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,°

To be compar'd to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out, wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, an' swoor by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house° in her min',
She pits hersel an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin:
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view:
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stownlins, prie'd her bonnie mou',
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
An' slips out by hersel:
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins grapit for the bauks,
And in the blue-clue throws then,°
Right fear'd that night.

An' aye she win't, an' aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin';
Till something held within the pat,
Guid Lord! but she was quaukin'!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',

Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin
To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple at the glass,°
I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She noticed na an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out-thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face°!
I daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul Thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune!
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
An' lived an' died deleerit,
On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,° —
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' aye a rantin' kirn° we gat,
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
He gat hemp-seed,° I mind it weel,
An' he made unco light o't;
But mony a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night."

Then up gat fetchin' Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense:
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin';
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin:
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
"Hemp-seed! I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass
Come after me an' draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,

An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld come rinnin' out,
An' hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night!

Meg fain wad to the barn gane
To winn three wechts o' naething°;
But for to meet the Deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
And twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That very night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie° gies a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters;
A ratton rattl'd up the wa',
An' she cried "Lord preserve her!"
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',

An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervor
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanced the stack he faddom'd thrice° 190
Was timmer-propt for thrawin':
He taks a swirlie auld moss-oak
For some black gruesome Carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin' 195
Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As cantie as a kittlin;
But och! that night, amang the shaws,
She gat a fearfu' settlin'! 200
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin';
Where three lairds' lands met° at a burn,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night. 205

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpled;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpled;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays, 210
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the brackens on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The Deil, or else an outler quey,°
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool°;
Near lav'rock height she jumpit,
But miss'd a fit, an' in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three° are ranged;
And every time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's year° did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
And unco tales, an' funny jokes, —
Their sports were cheap and cheery;
Till butter'd sow'ns,° wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blythe that night.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been —
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh°;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does° a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns came drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,

To do some errands, and convoy her hame.°
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Well-pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare —
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart —
A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth —
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?

Curse on his perjur'd arts, dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food:
The sowpe° their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it good;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond auld sin' lint was i' the bell.°

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible,° ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide —
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's° wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs,° worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin° beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:

Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name°
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, was lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing"°
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,

In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole°;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,°
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,°
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God°;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile;
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed thro' Wallace's° undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die — the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

THE HOLY FAIR

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in religion.
HYPOCRISY À LA MODE.

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,

I walkèd forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The risin' sun, owre Galston° muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin' down the furrs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin' up the way.
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining°;
The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes;
Their visage wither'd, lang an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes:
The third cam up, hap-stap-an'-lowp,°
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."

Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak,
An' taks me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en the feck
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

"My name is Fun — your crony dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,
To spend an hour in daffin':
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkled pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

Quoth I, "Wi' a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,°
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' mony a wearie bodie
In droves that day.

Here farmers gash in ridin' graith
Gaed hoddin' by their cotters;
There swankies young in braw braid-claith
Are springin' owre the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin' barefit, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter,

Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in mony a whang,
An' farls bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glow'r Black Bonnet° throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show°:
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin';
Some carryin' deals, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy bleth'rin'
Right loud that day.

Here some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,°
Wi' screw'd up, grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps, at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation;
For Moodie° speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The very sight o' Moodie's face
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin' an' wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin' an' he's jumpin'!
His lengthen'd chin, his turned-up snout,
His eldritch squeal an' gestures,
O how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plaisters,°
On sic a day!

But, hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;
There's peace an' rest nae langer;
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith° opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine
Of moral pow'rs an' reason?
His English style an' gesture fine

Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,°
Or some auld pagan Heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,°
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While Common Sense° has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate°
Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller, neist, the Guard relieves,
An' Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith! the birkie wants a Manse,
So cannilie he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now, butt an' ben, the Change-house° fills,
Wi' yill-caup Commentators;
Here's crying out for bakes an' gills,
An' there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic, an' wi' Scripture,

They raise a din, that in the end
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it gi'es us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin' deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cosy i' the neuk,
An' formin' assignations
To meet some day.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin',
An' echoes back return the shouts;
Black Russel is na sparin':
His piercing words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, where devils dwell,
Our very "sauls does harrow"
Wi' fright that day!

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit
Fill'd fou o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame, an' scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half-asleep start up wi' fear
An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear
'Twas but some neebor snorin'
Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell
How mony stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist;
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
Amang the furms and benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

In comes a gawsie, gash guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them't like a tether,°
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,

Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu', ance yoursel
How bonnie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna for a kebbuck-heel
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell,° wi' rattlin' tow,
Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger hame the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon°:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

How mony hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine,
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' mony jobs that day begin,
May end in houghmagandie
Some ither day.

THE TWA DOGS

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's Isle,
That bears the name o' auld King Coil,°

Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearin' through the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that werena thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs,
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.°
His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent ane hour caressin'
E'en wi' a tinkler-gipsy's messan:
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, though e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stand as glad to see him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie;
Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,°
Was made lang syne — Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke;
His honest, sonsie, bawsent face
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his tousie back

Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawsie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
And unco pack and thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit;
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
And worried ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin' weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords of the creation.

CÆSAR

I've often wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our Laird gets in his rackèd rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents;
He rises when he likes himsel';
His flunkies answer at the bell:
He ca's his coach; he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonny silken purse
As lang's my tail, where, through the steeks,
The yellow-letter'd Geordie° keeks.
Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
And though the gentry first are stechin',

Yet e'en the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee blastit wonner!
Poor worthless elf! it eats a dinner
Better than ony tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan';
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash'd eneugh;
A cottar howkin' in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like;
Himsel', a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddy weans,
And nought but his han'-darg° to keep
Them right and tight in thack and rape.
And when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer
And they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But how it comes I never kent yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
An' buirdly chiels and clever hizzies
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR

But then, to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit,

Lord, man! our gentry care sae little
For delvers, ditchers and sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk
As I wad by a stinking brock.
I've noticed, on our Laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash°;
He'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear:
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!
I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches!

LUATH

They're no' sae wretched's ane wad think,
Though constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gi'es them little fright.
Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They're aye in less or mair provided;
An' though fatigued wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.
The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fireside.
And whyles twalpenny-worth° o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:

They'll talk o' patronage° and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts;
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
And ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.
As bleak-faced Hallowmas° returns
They get the jovial rantin' kirns,
When rural life o' every station
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, and social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.
That merry day the year begins
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin' pipe and sneeshin'-mill
Are handed round wi' right gude-will;
The canty auld folk crackin' crouse,
The young anes ranting through the house —
My heart has been sae fain to see them
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.
Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre often play'd.
There's mony a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch
Some rascal's pridefu' greed° to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a-parliamentin',
For Britain's gude his saul indentin —

CÆSAR

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's gude! — guid faith! I doubt it!
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
And saying ay or no's they bid him!
At operas and plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading.
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton* an' see the worl'.
There, at Vienna, or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails°;
Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars and fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Then bouses drumly German water,°
To make himsel' look fair and fatter.
For Britain's gude! — for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, and faction!

LUATH

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate?
Are we sae foughten and harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last?
O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themselves wi' country sports,
It wad for every ane be better,
The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,

Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows:
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speaking lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.
But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar?
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure;
Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
The very thought o't needna fear them.

CÆSAR

Lord, man, were ye but whyles where I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envý 'em,
It's true, they needna starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They make enow themselves to vex them,
An' aye the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.
A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country lassie at her wheel,
Her dizzens° done, she's unco weel;
But gentlemen, an' ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.

They loiter, lounging, lank, and lazy;
Though de'il haet ails them, yet uneasy;

Their days insipid, dull and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless.
And e'en their sports, their balls, and races,
Their galloping through public places;
There's sic parade, sic pomp and art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
The ladies arm-in-arm, in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run de'ils and jades thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup and platie,
They sip the scandal-potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
Pore owre the devil's picture beuks°;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stack-yard,
And cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.
There's some exception, man and woman;
But this is gentry's life in common.

By this the sun was out o' sight,
And darker gloamin brought the night;
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone,
The kye stood rowtin' i' the loan;
When up they gat and shook their lugs,
Rejoiced they werena men but dogs;
And each took aff his several way,
Resolved to meet some ither day.

THE BRIGS OF AYR

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plow,
Learning his tuneful trade from every bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers gray, wild-whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field, —
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss° of rhymes?
Or labor hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
Still, if some patron's generous care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace;
When Ballantyne befriends his humble name
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,°
And thack and rape° secure the toil-won crap;
Potatoe-bings° are snuggèd up frae skaith

O' coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumber'd buds an' flowers' delicious spoils.
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by Man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
The thund'ring guns are heard on ev'ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except perhaps the Robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's° wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why:)
The drowsy Dungeon clock° had number'd two,
And Wallace Tower° had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, wi' sullen-sounding roar,

Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:
All else was hush'd as Nature's closèd e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, owre the glittering stream —
When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clanging sough of whistling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the gos° drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descried
The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And ev'n the very deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd o' ancient Pictish° race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face;
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
Yet, teughly doure, he hade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams° got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
Wi' virls an' whirlygigums° at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid-een: —

AULD BRIG

I doubtna, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank.°
Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me —
Tho', faith! that date, I doubt, ye'll never see —
There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG

Auld Vandal! ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin'd formless bulk o' stane and lime,
Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time?
There's men of taste wou'd tak the Ducat stream,°
Tho' they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
O' sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;

When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal° draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down the snaw-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck, down to the Ratton-key,°
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies!
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG

Fine architecture, trowth, I needs must say't o't,
The Lord be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs, fantastic, stony groves°;
Windows and doors in nameless sculptures drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command° be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea!
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;
Fit only for a doited monkish race,

Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
Or cuifs° of later times wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling, true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection,
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy Proveses, an' mony a Bailie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye;
Ye dainty Deacons, an' ye douce Conveeners°,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners!
Ye godly Councils wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly Brethren° o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your hurdies to the smiters;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers°:
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base degen'rate race!
Nae langer rev'rend men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story;
Nae langer thrifty citizens, an' douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house;
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men, three-parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd° gear on damn'd new brigs
and harbors!

NEW BRIG

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through:
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle°;
But, under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd;
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can have a handle
To mouth "a Citizen," a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hops an' raisins,
Or gather'd liberal views in bonds and seisins.
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shor'd them wi' a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense for once betray'd them,
Plain dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight
A fairy train appear'd in order bright;
Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd:
They footed o'er the watery glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.
O had M'Lauchlan,° thairm-inspiring sage,

Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When thro' his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland rage,
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares,
How would his Highland lug been nobler fired,
And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspired!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.
The Genius of the Stream in front appears,
A venerable Chief, advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye;
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow;
Next follow'd Courage° with his martial stride,
From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild benignant air,
A female form, came from the towers of Stair:
Learning and Worth° in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-loved abode;
Last, white-robed Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death:
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

THE VISION

DUAN FIRST

THE sun had closed the winter day,
The curlers° quat their roarin' play,
An' hunger'd maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Where she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin'-tree
The lee-lang day had tirèd me;
And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There lanely by the ingle-cheek
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin';
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin'.

All in this mottie misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae-thing,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring "blockhead! coof!"
And heaved on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath —

When click! the string the snick did draw;
An' jee! the door gaed to the wa';
And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin' bright,
A tight outlandish hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
An' steppèd ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
I took her for some Scottish Muse
By that same token;

And come to stop these reckless vows,
Would soon been broken.

A hare-brain'd, sentimental trace,
Was strongly markèd in her face;
A wildly-witty rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd to my astonish'd view
A well-known land.°

Here rivers in the sea were lost;
There mountains to the skies were tost:
Here tumbling billows mark'd the coast
With surging foam;
There, distant, shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There well-fed Irwine stately thuds;
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough° rear'd her head;

Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tower or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic° wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dyed steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their Suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour,° mark him well!
Bold Richardton's° heroic swell;
The Chief — on Sark who glorious fell,°
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptred Pictish shade°
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

DUAN SECOND

With musing-deep astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder Sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail! my own inspirèd bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low;
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

"Know the great Genius of this land
Has many a light aërial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share:
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,

They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the lab'ring hind,
The artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard;
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I — Coila° my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely-caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes, —
Fired at the simple artless lays
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled Earth
Warm-cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,

I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields and azure skies
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adorèd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.°

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow;

Or wake the bosom-melting throe
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour with Gray° the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
And trust me, not Potosi's° mine,
Nor king's regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic Bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the dignity of Man,
With Soul erect;
And trust the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this:" She solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves and berries red
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE, THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Was ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsled in the ditch;
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc he cam doytin by.
  Wi' glowrin' een, an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, wae's my heart! he could na mend it!
He gapèd wide, but naething spak;
At length poor Mailie silence brak: —

"O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.
  "Tell him, if e'er again he keep°
As muckle gear as buy a sheep, —
O bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!
  "Tell him he was a Master kin',

An' aye was guid to me an' mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.
"O bid him save their harmless lives
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel:
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' ripps o' corn.
"An' may they never learn the gates
Of ither vile wanrestfu' pets —
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For mony a year come thro' the shears;
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.
"My poor tup-lamb, my son an' heir,
O bid him breed him up wi' care!
An', if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless graceless brutes.
"An' neist my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith;
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kind to ane anither.
"Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;

An' bid him burn this cursed tether;
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blether."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
An' closed her een amang the dead!

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears tricklin' down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes —
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neibor dear
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense;

I'll say't, she never brak a fence
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread,
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tups,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie's, dead.

Wae worth° the man wha first did shape
That vile wanchancie thing — a rape!
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin' dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead.

O a' ye bards on bonnie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters° tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed;
His heart will never get aboon
His Mailie dead!

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid at times to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true's the Deil's in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
'S a muckle pity.

The clachan yill° had made me canty,
I wasna fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes kent aye
Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glowre
The distant Cumnock° hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin' down on Willie's mill,

Setting my staff, wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did forgather,
That pat me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-tae'd leister on the ither
Lay large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,°
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

"Guid-een," quo' I; "Friend! hae ye been mawin,
When ither folk are busy sawin?"
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length says I, "Friend, wh'are ye gaun?
Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe — "My name is Death,
But be na fley'd." — Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie:
I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith,
See, there's a gully!"

"Gudeman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did — I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd° —
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gie's your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat —
Come, gie's your news;
This while ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an' shook his head,
"It's e'en a lang lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are near-hand fled,
Sin' I was to the butching bred;
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid
To stap or scaur me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
An' faith! he'll waur me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan —
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae well acquaint wi' Buchan°
An' ither chaps,

The weans haud out their fingers laughin',
And pouk my hips.

"'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gane,
I threw a noble throw at ane —
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain —
But deil may care!
It just play'd dirl° on the bane,
But did nae mair.

"Hornbook was by wi' ready art,
And had sae fortified the part
That, when I lookèd to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
O' a kail-runt.

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury
I near-hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True sal-marinum o' the seas;

The farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

"Forbye some new uncommon weapons, —
Urinus spiritus of capons;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Wae's me for Johnny Ged's Hole° now,"
Quoth I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward° where gowans grew
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
They'll ruin Johnie!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says "Ye needna yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear;
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

"Where I kill'd ane, a fair strae-death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap and pill.

"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

"A country laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well:
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was laird himsel.

"That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
An's weel pay'd for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey
Wi' his damn'd dirt.

"But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot
As dead's a herrin':
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin'!"

But, just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rais'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
And sae did Death.

A DREAM

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May heaven augment your blisses
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see —
A humble poet wishes°!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By mony a lord an' lady;
"God save the King!" 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said aye;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes well-turn'd an' ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me, before a monarch's face —
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So nae reflection on your Grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's mony waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
My skill may weel be doubted;
But Facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft° an' clouted,
An' now the third part of the string,
An' less, will gang about it,
Than did ae day.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation;
But faith! I muckle doubt, my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps wha in a barn or byre
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace
Her broken shins to plaister,
Your sair taxation does her fleece
Till she has scarce a tester.
For me, thank God! my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or faith! I fear that with the geese
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

Adieu, my Liege! may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,

And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great Birth-day.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonny bairntime Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant aye;
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want aye
On ony day.

God bless you a'! Consider now
Ye're unco muckle dautit;
But, e'er the course o' life be through,
It may be bitter sautit:
An' I hae seen their coggie fou
That yet hae tarrow't at it;

But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautit
Fu' clean that day.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeal!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kenn'd an' noted is thy name;
An', tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles rangin' like a roarin' lion°
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin';
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest° flyin',
Tirlin' the kirks°;

Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or, where auld ruin'd castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my grannie summon
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortrees comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary windy winter night
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye like a rash-buss stood in sight
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stoor "quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake
On whistlin' wings.

Let warlocks grim an' wither'd hags
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags

They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence country wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn° in vain;
For oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin' skill;
An' dawtit twal-pint° Hawkie's gane
As yell's the bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies° haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' 'nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons'° mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brither ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
And all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r;

Then you, ye auld snick-drawing dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be you fa!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the man of Uz°
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
While scabs an' blotches did him gall
Wi' bitter claw,

An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd wicked scawl',
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin' fierce,
Sin' that day Michael° did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan° tongue, or Erse,°
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin',
To your black pit;
But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin',
An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither:
The rigid righteous is a fool,
The rigid wise anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight,
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
SOLOMON (Eccles. vii. 16).

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water:
The heapèd happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter:

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel° for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless careless sakes,
Would here propone defences, —
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' their's compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer;

But cast a moment's fair regard —
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount° what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco leeway.

See Social life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmogrified, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell° to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination —
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
  To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
  The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
  How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
  Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute,
  We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute.
  But know not what's resisted.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

O THOU, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
  A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
  They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
  For gifts an' grace

A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve most just damnation,
For broken laws,
Sax thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lakes,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes;

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there and dancin' here,
Wi' great an' sma':
For I am keepit by thy fear
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshy lust;

An' sometimes too, in warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
That he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry an' pray'r,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
Upo' their heads;
Lord, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My very heart and soul are quakin',
To think how we stood sweatin', shakin',
An' swat wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin' lips and snakin',
Held up his head.

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him;
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their pray'r:
But, for thy people's sake, destroy them,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine
Excell'd by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

I'll no say men are villains a';
The real harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked:
But oh! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted°!

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure·

For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer.
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neibor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han', your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man
Wi' sharpen'd sly° inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But oh! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile°
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause —
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere
Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker —
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
Is sure a noble anchor.

Adieu, dear amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth
Erect your brow undaunting.
In ploughman phrase, God send you speed
Still daily to grow wiser;

And may ye better reck the rede
Than ever did th' adviser!

A WINTER NIGHT

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift;

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labor sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl;

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing!
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you, on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd, —
The blood-stained roost and sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffl'd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole: —

"Blow, blow, ye winds,° with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!
See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,

A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim
To bless himself alone?
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares;
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast

Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low,
By cruel fortune's undeservèd blow?

Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair; for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind —
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.°

SCOTCH DRINK

> Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
> That's sinking in despair;
> An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
> That's prest wi' grief an' care;
> There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
> Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
> Till he forgets his loves or debts,
> An' minds his griefs no more.
> SOLOMON (Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7).

LET other Poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drunken Bacchus,
An' crabbèd names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug;
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.°

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch Drink,
Whether thro' wimplin worms thou jink,

Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
An' aits set up their awnie horn,
An' pease an' beans at een or morn,
Perfume the plain;
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,°
Thou King o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
When heavy-dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin'
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear°:
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At's weary toil:
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind, in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,°
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in!
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a New-Year° mornin'
In cog or bicker,
An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,°
An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan° gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare to see thee fizz an' freath
I' th' luggèd caup!
Then Burnewin comes on like death
At ev'ry chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, banie, ploughman chiel,°
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,

Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When neibors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason;
But mony daily weet their weasan'
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' mony a pain an' brash!
Twins mony a poor, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.°

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well,
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel'!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him, inch by inch,

Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whisky punch
Wi' honest men!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whisky stells their prize —
Haud up thy hand, deil! Ance — twice — thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor damn'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a bannock, and a gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak' a' the rest,
An' deal'd about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

ELEGY ON CAPT. MATTHEW HENDERSON

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl thee hame to his black smiddie
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish° come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neibors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing earns,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin' down your glens,
Wi' toddlin din,
Or foaming strang wi' hasty stens
Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines hanging bonnilie,
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n when beans their fragrance shed
I' th' rustling gale,

Ye maukins, whiddin' thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood —
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clamouring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flowering clover gay;
And, when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,
What time the moon wi' silent glowr
Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains;

But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe?
And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou, Simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay green flow'ry tresses shear
For him that's dead!

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou, Winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

O Henderson! the man! the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever?
And hast thou crost that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound?
Like thee, where shall I find another,
The world around?

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH

Stop, passenger! my story's brief,
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell nae common tale o' grief,
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man;
A look of pity hither cast,
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man,
There moulders here a gallant heart;
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man;
The sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingein' sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
May dool and sorrow be his lot,
For Matthew was a rare man.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's was a bright one;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heav'nly Light, man.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR

A GUID New Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe backit now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,

Thou could hae gane like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee dappled, sleek an' glaizie,
A bonnie gray:
He should been tight° that daur't to raize thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark°;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride
When ye bure hame my bonnie bride;

An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart° I could braggèd wide
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wobble
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young and skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,°
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skriegh
An' tak the road!
Town's-bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road aye like a swallow:
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Where'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpled, hunter cattle,°
Might aiblins waur'd thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles, thou tried their mettle,
An' gart them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aucht hours' gaun,
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood° beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and riskit,°
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labor back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer°;
I kenn'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae faced it;
Thou never lap, an' stenned, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But, just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh° is now thy bairn-time a',
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa
That thou hast nurst:

They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,°
The very warst.

Mony a sair darg we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' mony an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
An' thy auld days may end in starvin';
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,
Where ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUSE, ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out-thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,°
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But oh! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man, whose agèd step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
Began the rev'rend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth with me to mourn
The miseries of man.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride —
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!

Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right;
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

"A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But oh! what crowds in ev'ry land
All wretched and forlorn,
Thro' weary life this lesson learn —
That man was made to mourn.

"Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn —
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave, —
By nature's law design'd, —
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor oppressèd honest man,
Had never sure been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

"O Death, the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my agèd limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;

But oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn."

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL 1786

Wee modest crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward springing, blythe to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield,

But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade,
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd:
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

ON A SCOTCH BARD, GONE TO THE WEST INDIES

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live an' never think,
Come mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gi'en us a' a jink,
An' owre the sea.

Lament him, a' ye rantin core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore;
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
In social key;
For now he's taen anither shore,
An' owre the sea!

The bonnie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him;
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle,
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as ony wumble,
That's owre the sea!

Auld cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
An' stain them wi' the saut saut tear:
'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee;
He was her Laureat mony a year,
That's owre the sea!

He saw misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet° brak his heart at last —
Ill may she be!
So took a berth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So row'd his hurdies in a hammock,
An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gi'en to great misguidin',
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin',
He dealt it free:

The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel;
Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
And fu' o' glee;
He wad na wrang'd the vera deil,
That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie!
I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
Tho' owre the sea!

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS THRO' SCOTLAND

COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM

HEAR, Land o' Cakes,° and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk° to Johnny Groats°; —
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you taking notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel!

And wow! he has an unco sleight
O' cauk and keel.°

By some auld houlet-haunted biggin,
Or kirk deserted by its riggin'
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, Lord save's! colleaguin'
At some black art.

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or cham'er,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
And you, deep read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches —
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches!

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle-blade
And dog-skin wallet,
And taen the — Antiquarian trade
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont gude;
And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets
Before the Flood.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff fu' gleg
The cut of Adam's philibeg;

The knife that nicket Abel's craig —
He'll prove you fully
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him;
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the Pow'rs o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose!
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say "Shame fa' thee!"

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumping glowrin' trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random wanton spouts,°
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As poet Burns came by,
That to a bard I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was, he shor'd me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength° I rin;
There high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well
As Nature gave them me;
I am, altho' I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,°
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,

And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin° pensive Autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

This, too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a sheltering safe retreat
From prone-descending show'rs.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care:
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms,
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,

And eye the smoking dewy lawn,
  And misty mountain gray;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
  Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
  Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
  My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
  Their shadows' wat'ry bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
  My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
  The close embow'ring thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
  Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
  Their honour'd native land!
So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
  To social-flowing glasses
The grace be — "Athole's honest men,
  And Athole's bonnie lasses!"°

TO A HAGGIS

Fair fa' your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race°!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
  Painch, tripe, or thairm:

Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill;
Your pin° wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need;
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready sleight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like ony ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then, horn for horn° they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost! on they drive,
Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,
Bethankit° hums.

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,

His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit:
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed —
The trembling earth resounds his tread!
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
Gie her a Haggis!

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE

My curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang,
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,

Wi' pitying moan;
But thee — thou hell o' a' diseases!
Aye mocks our groan.

O' a' the numerous human dools,
Ill hairsts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,°
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools —
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And rankèd plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
Amang them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of discord squeal,
Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoe-thick; —
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
A towmont's Toothache!

TO A LOUSE

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH

Ha! wh'are ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie!
Your impudence protects you sairly:

I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner!
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Where horn nor bane° ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The very tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as onie grozet:
O for some rank mercurial rozet,
Or fell red smeddum!
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flannen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi°! fie,
How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursèd speed
The blastie's makin'!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n devotion!

LINES WRITTEN IN FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE

ON NITH-SIDE

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.—
Life is but a day at most,

Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.
  As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her syren air
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.
  As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful Peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.
  As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease.
There ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say man's true genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not — Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal Nature grudge thee one?

Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n
To Virtue or to Vice is giv'n.
Say to be just, and kind, and wise, —
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.
Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy and good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.
Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman of Nith-side.

A BARD'S EPITAPH

Is there a whim-inspirèd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area° throng,
O, pass not by!

But, with a frater-feeling° strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause — and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know prudent cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down, to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,

In hamely westlin jingle.°
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug;
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursèd pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whyles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't:
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"
Auld age ne'er mind a feg;
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns° and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could mak us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,

However fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in making muckle, mair:
It's no in books, it's no in laer,
To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,

Could make us happy lang;
The heart aye's the part aye
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
What drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how oft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless, and fearless,
Of either heav'n or hell!
Esteeming, and deeming
It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's° thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They mak us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean°!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

O all ye pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r;
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!

Long since this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
  Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
  In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
  A tie more tender still.
    It lightens, it brightens
      The tenebrific° scene,
    To meet with, and greet with
      My Davie or my Jean.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin', rank and file,
  Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine°
  Were glowrin' owre my pen.
My spavied Pegasus will limp,
  Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
  An' rin an unco fit:
    But lest then the beast then
      Should rue this hasty ride,
    I'll light now, and dight now
      His sweaty wizen'd hide.

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD

While briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' paitricks scraichin' loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin' seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom, in an unknown frien',
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-een° we had a rockin',°
To ca' the crack° and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle fun and jokin',
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.°

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I "Can this be Pope,° or Steele,°
Or Beattie's° wark!"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin' fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier'd;
Then a' that kenn'd him round declar'd
He had ingine,
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,° 35
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke-back,
A pint an' gill° I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell;
Tho' rude an' rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel,
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like,° by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet what the matter?

Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say "How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learnèd foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin'-hammers.

A set o' dull conceited hashes
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek°!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's° glee,
Or Fergusson's,° the bauld an' slee,

Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve, are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel,
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends, an' folks that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as mony still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses — Gude forgie me!
For mony a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline Race, or Mauchline Fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap,° we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin water;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa, ye selfish warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an grace,
Ev'n love an' friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

TO THE SAME

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor,
To honest-hearted auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjeskit sair, with weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten-hours' bite,
My awkwart Muse sair pleads and begs
I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she "Ye ken we've been sae busy,
This month an' mair,
That trouth my head is grown quite dizzie,
An' something sair."

Her dowff excuses pat me mad;
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
This very night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,

Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
An' thank him kindly?"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
An' down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove, I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waft an' warp;
She's but a bitch.

She's gien me mony a jirt an' fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the Lord, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the sax-an'-twentieth simmer
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer,
Frae year to year:
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behind a kist to lie an' sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent per cent
An' muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A bailie's name?

Or is't the paughty feudal thane,°
Wi' ruffl'd sark an' glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;

But, thanks to Heaven! that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

O mandate glorious and divine!
The followers of the ragged Nine,°
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine,
In glorious light,
While sordid sons of Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, an' joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year!

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it:
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,°
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan,° or wi' Gilbertfield,°
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson,° the writer-chiel,°
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,

As whiles they're like to be my dead,°
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets° o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style;
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle,
Beside New Holland,°
Or where wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow an' Tweed,° to mony a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,°
Naebody sings.

Th' Ilissus,° Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in mony a tunefu' line;
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious Wallace°
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae Southron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,°
Or glorious died.

O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
Wi' wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me°
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frost on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light,

Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander
Adown some trottin' burn's meander,
An' no think lang°;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive;
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal;
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies;
While Terra Firma, on her axis,
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In Robert Burns.

POSTSCRIPT°

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this New-Light,
'Bout which our herds sae aft have been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid Lallans,
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewin',
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;

For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk,
An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin, to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The herds an' hissels were alarm'd:
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks;
An' mony a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in mony lands,
An' auld-light caddies bure sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks;
The lairds forbad, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But new-light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe,
Till now amaist on ev'ry knowe
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their new-light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the auld-light flocks are bleatin';
Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin';
Mysel, I've even seen them greetin'
Wi' girnin spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lied on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns!
Some auld-light herds in neibor-touns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
An' stay ae month amang the moons,
An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them;
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
An' when the new-light billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter";
But tho' dull-prose folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH

ENCLOSING A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED

While at the stook the shearers° cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage rinnin' scour;
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban',° an' douce black bonnet,°
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple country bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack so sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,°
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse hell upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Their raxin' conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gawn,° misca't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus'd him:
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've used him?

See him the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honour bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a Muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

God knows I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But, twenty times, I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause,
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They tak religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what? to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin straight.

All hail, Religion, maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotcht an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
Wi' trembling voice I tune my strain
To join wi' those,
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr, my dear, my native ground!
Within thy presbyterial bound,
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,

As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd,
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd,
(Which gies you honour) —
Even, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

TO JAMES SMITH

Dear Smith, the sleeest pawkie thief
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
Just gaun to see you;
And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair taen I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin', Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature,
She's wrote "The Man."

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancie yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the country clash,
An' raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But, in requit,
Has blest me with a random shot
O' country wit.

This while my notion's taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent;
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries "Hoolie!

I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

"There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensured their debtors
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters
Their unknown pages."

Then fareweel hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, wi' tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound an' hale;
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave Care o'er side!
And large, before Enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,

Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield:
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See, crazy, weary, joyless Eild,
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hoastin', hirplin' owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin',
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;
An' fareweel dear deluding woman,
The joy of joys!

O life, how pleasant is thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like schoolboys, at th' expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves:
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chase;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey;
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin',
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin',
They often groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining —
But truce wi' peevish, poor complaining!
Is Fortune's fickle Luna° waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel "Ye Pow'rs!" and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,

Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to country lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour;
And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster° merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt°;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent per cent;
But gie me real, sterling wit,°
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleased to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,

Grave, tideless-blooded, calm, and cool,
Compar'd wi' you — O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dyke!

Nae hare-brain'd sentimental traces,
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses,
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattlin' squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes —
Ye ken the road.

Whilst I — but I shall haud me there —
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where —
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content with You to mak a pair,
Where'er I gang.

ANSWER TO VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE POET

BY THE GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE

GUIDWIFE,
I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate
An' first could thresh the barn,°
Or haud a yokin'° at the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn, —
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,°
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stooked raw,
Wi' claivers, an' haivers,
Wearing the day awa, —

Ev'n then a wish! (I mind its power)
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast;
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear:

No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise;
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairst I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,°
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een,
That gart my head-strings tingle;
I firèd, inspirèd,
At ev'ry kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I fearèd aye to speak.

Health to the sex! ilk guid chiel says,
Wi' merry dance in winter days,
An' we to share in common:
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heav'n below,
Is rapture-giving woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her!
Ye're wae men, ye're nae men,
That slight the lovely dears;

To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

For you, no bred to barn or byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid° ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;
'Twad please me to the nine.
I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,°
Or proud imperial purple.
Farewell then, lang hale then,
An' plenty be your fa';
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'.

EPISTLE TO HUGH PARKER

In this strange land,° this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er crost the Muse's heckles,
Nor limpit in poetic shackles;
A land that prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stacher't through it;
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,
I hear it — for in vain I leuk.
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
Enhuskèd by a fog infernal;

Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians, —
I'm dwindled down to mere existence,
Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae kend face but Jenny Geddes.°
Jenny, my Pegasean pride!
Dowie she saunters down Nithside,
And ay a westlin° leuk she throws,
While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose!
Was it for this, wi' canny care,
Thou bure the Bard through many a shire?
At howes or hillocks never stumbled,
And late or early never grumbled?
O, had I power like inclination,
I'd heeze thee up a constellation,
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the ecliptic like a bar;
Or turn the pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
Down the zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship's face;
For I could lay my bread and kail
He'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail.°
Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
And nought but peat reek i' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?
Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye'll find me in a better tune;
But till we meet and weet our whistle,
Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you aye as weel's I want ye,°
And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron° south!
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tauld mysel by word o' mouth,
He'd tak my letter;
I lippen'd to the chiel in trouth,
And bade nae better.

But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
I'm turn'd a gauger — Peace be here!
Parnassian queans,° I fear, I fear,
Ye'll now disdain me!
And then my fifty pounds a year
Will little gain me.

Ye glaiket, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha by Castalia's wimplin' streamies,
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,

They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is —
I need na vaunt,
But I'll sned besoms° — thraw saugh woodies,°
Before they want.

Lord help us thro' this warld o' care!
I'm weary sick o't late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than mony ithers;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brithers?

Come, Firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair;
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme
(I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time) —
To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky,
I wat she is a daintie chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
I'm yours for aye.

EPISTLE TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER

My honour'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal;
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty warld were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And fortune favour worth and merit,
As they deserve:
And aye a rowth, roast beef and claret:
Syne wha wad starve?

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and fripp'ry deck her,
Oh! flick'ring, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Aye wav'ring like the willow wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches, like baudrons by a rattan,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's off like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it isna fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,

Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flee, aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon heels-o'er-gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,°
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murd'ring wrestle,
As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the Devil!
Amen! amen!

WINTER

The wintry wast extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:

While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae:
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, — they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (Oh! do Thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH

O Thou unknown Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;

As something, loudly in my breast,
  Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
  With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
  Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
  Or frailty stept aside,
Do thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,
  In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
  No other plea I have,
But Thou art good; and Goodness still
  Delighteth to forgive.

A PRAYER, UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH

O Thou great Being! what Thou art
  Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
  Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
  All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
  Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear and not repine!

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fasht him,
Except the moment that they crusht him;
For sune as chance or fate had husht 'em,
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or sang he lasht 'em,
And thought it sport.

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roos'd him than!

LINES ON AN INTERVIEW WITH LORD DAER

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er to be forgotten day,
Sae far I sprachled up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drunken writers' feasts,
Nay, been braw-fou 'mang godly priests,
Wi' rev'rence be it spoken!
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum
Their hydra° drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord — stand out, my shin°;
A Lord — a Peer — an Earl's son,
Up higher yet, my bonnet!
And sic a Lord! — lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But O for Hogarth's° magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glow'r,
And how he star'd and stammer'd,
When govin', as if led wi' branks,
An' stumpin' on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his Lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen;

Except good sense and social glee,
An' (what surprised me°) modesty,
I markèd nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his lordship I shall learn
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as weel's another;
Nae honest worthy man need care
To meet with noble youthful Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

THE FAREWELL

Farewell, old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess°! tho' thou'rt bereft
Of my parental care,
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou'lt share!

Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith,° my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
O then befriend my Jean!

When bursting anguish tears my heart,
From thee, my Jeany, must I part?
Thou weeping answ'rest "no!"
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace;
I for thy sake must go!
Thee, Hamilton,° and Aiken° dear,
A grateful, warm adieu!
I, with a much-indebted tear,
Shall still remember you!
All-hail then the gale then,
Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles, and whistles,
I'll never see thee more!

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go, live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains;
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe;
The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side:
Ah, helpless nurslings! who will now provide
That life a mother only can bestow?

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Taks up its last abode;
His saul has taen some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the grun,
Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat° a-wee,
Till ance you've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye have nane;
Justice, alas! has gien him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, Sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

ON STIRLING

HERE Stuarts once in glory reign'd,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands;
The injured Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills their throne,
An idiot race to honour lost,
Who know them best, despise them most.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW, AT THE KING'S ARMS TAVERN, DUMFRIES

YE men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
'Gainst poor Excisemen! give the cause a hearing;
What are your landlords' rent-rolls? taxing ledgers:
What premiers, what? even Monarchs' mighty gaugers:
Nay, what are priests, those seeming godly wise men?
What are they, pray, but spiritual Excisemen?

LINES WRITTEN AT LOUDON MANSE

THE night was still, and o'er the hill
The moon shone on the castle wa';
The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
Around her, on the castle wa'.

Sae merrily they danced the ring,
Frae eenin' till the cock did craw;
And aye the o'erword o' the spring
Was Irvine's bairns are bonnie a'.

THE TOAD-EATER

WHAT of earls with whom you have supt,
And of dukes that you dined with yestreen?
Lord! an insect's an insect at most,
Though it crawl on the curls of a Queen.

EPITAPH ON MY FATHER

O YE, whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the gen'rous friend.

The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
For "ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's side."

MARY MORISON

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',°
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?

If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown!
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED RED ROSE

My love is like a red red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

AFTON WATER

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow:
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

GO FETCH TO ME A PINT O' WINE

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie.
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's no the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar,
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

HIGHLAND MARY

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft have kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN

Thou lingering star, with lessening ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usherest in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.

O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace —
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd amorous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,
Till too too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy blissful place of rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

MY NANNIE O

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa' to Nannie O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill,
The night's baith mirk and rainy O;
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hill to Nannie O.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young:
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonnie O:
The opening gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome aye to Nannie O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' my Nannie O.

Our auld Guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nannie O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will send me O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie O.

AE FOND KISS

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.°

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!

Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

MY NANNIE'S AWA

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless — my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn:
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie — and Nannie's awa.

Thou laverock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou, mellow mavis, that hails the night-fa',
Gie over for pity — my Nannie's awa.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay;
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me — now Nannie's awa.

YE BANKS AND BRAES

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care?
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause lover stole my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

(Earlier Version)

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days,
When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae off its thorny tree:
But my fause luver staw my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd ere noon.

OF A' THE AIRTS

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There's wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:

I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
  I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
  By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
  But minds me o' my Jean.

THERE WAS A LAD

THERE was a lad was born in Kyle,
But what'n a day o' what'n a style°
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
  To be sae nice wi' Robin.

  Robin was a rovin' boy,
    Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
  Robin was a rovin' boy,
    Rantin' rovin' Robin.

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,°
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar win'
  Blew hansel in on Robin.

The gossip° keekit in his loof,
Quo' scho, Wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof,
  I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';

He'll be a credit till us a',
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee, Robin.

Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES

GREEN grow the rashes O,
Green grow the rashes O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend
Are spent amang the lasses O!

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses O.

The warly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them O.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie O;

An' warly cares, an' warly men,
  May a' gae tapsalteerie O!

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this,
  Ye're nought but senseless asses O:
The wisest man° the warl' saw,
  He dearly lov'd the lasses O.

Auld nature swears, the lovely dears
  Her noblest work she classes O;
Her prentice han' she tried on man,
  An' then she made the lasses O.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
  That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
    For a' that, and a' that,
      Our toils obscure, and a' that;
    The rank is but the guinea stamp;
      The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hodden-gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that.
    For a' that, and a' that,
      Their tinsel show, and a' that;
    The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
      Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man the warld o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidled i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

SCOTS WHA HAE

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY, BEFORE THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace° bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour!
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa'?
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!

IT WAS A' FOR OUR RIGHTFU' KING

It was a' for our rightfu' King,
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' King,
We e'er saw Irish land,
My dear,
We e'er saw Irish land.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My love and native land farewell,
For I maun cross the main,
My dear,
For I maun cross the main.

He turn'd him right and round about
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear,
Adieu for evermore.

The sodger from the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again,
My dear,
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk boune to sleep,
I think on him that's far awa',
The lee-lang night, and weep,
My dear,
The lee-lang night, and weep.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie:
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He played a spring and danced it round,
Below the gallows tree.

Oh, what is death but parting breath?
On mony a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword,
And there 's no a man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word.

I've lived a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart
And not avengèd be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!

WANDERING WILLIE

Here awa,° there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears to my ee;
Welcome now, Simmer, and welcome, my Willie,
The Simmer to nature, my Willie to me!

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers;
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!

BRAW LADS

Braw braw lads on Yarrow braes,
Ye wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow° braes nor Ettrick° shaws
Can match the lads o' Gala° Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;

And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Gala Water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tocher,
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Gala Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure!

CA' THE YOWES

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie.

Hark! the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Clouden's° woods amang;
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.

Yonder's Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,

O'er the dewy-bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to love and Heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can die — but canna part,
My bonnie dearie.

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,
Come let us spend the lightsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blythely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws —
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains, high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

BANKS OF DEVON

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!
But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew!
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

O' spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon° exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

THE GLOOMY NIGHT

THE gloomy night is gathering fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure,
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her ripening corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound:
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves!

Farewell, my friends! Farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those;
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr!

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE

The Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decayed on Catrine lee,
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sickened on the ee.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the whyle,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the braes o' Ballochmyle.

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in withering bowers,
Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair
Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
Fareweel, the bonnie banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel, sweet Ballochmyle.

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
Ye would na been sae shy;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.°

Yestreen I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure.
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fient a hair care I.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean
That looks sae proud and high.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu' dry.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or lear,
Be better than the kye.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddy's gear maks you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad spier your price,°
Were ye as poor as I.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I would na gie her in her sark,
For you wi' a' your thousand mark;
Ye need na look sae high.

TAM GLEN

My heart is a breaking, dear Tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity;
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak a fen';
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I maunna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,
"Guid-day to you, brute!" he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me guid hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentines' dealing,°
My heart to my mou gied a sten:
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written, Tam Glen.

The last Halloween° I was waukin'
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam up the house stalkin' —
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come, counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry;
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creepin' alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a soger, and life is a faught:
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a';
When at the blythe end of our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way,
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jad gae:
Come ease or come travail, come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is — "Welcome, and welcome again!"

WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD

O WHISTLE, and I'll come to you, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent, when ye come to court me,
And come na unless the back-yett be a-jee;
Syne up the back-stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me.
And come as ye were na comin' to me.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd na a flee:
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black ee,
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court na anither, tho' jokin' ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

OH, open the door, some pity to shew,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, oh!

The wan moon is setting ayont the white wave,
And time is setting with me, oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, oh!

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
She sees his pale corse on the plain, oh!
My true love, she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, oh!

MY AIN KIND DEARIE O

When o'er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrow'd field
Return sae dowf and wearie O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

In mirkest glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie O,
If thro' that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie O.
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,
And I were ne'er sae wearie O,
I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheery O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

O, FOR ANE AN' TWENTY, TAM!

An' O for ane an' twenty, Tam!
An' hey, sweet ane an' twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An' I saw ane an' twenty, Tam.

They snool me sair, and haud me down,
An' gar me look like bluntie, Tam!
But three short years will soon wheel roun',
An' then comes ane an' twenty, Tam.

A gleib o' lan', a claut o' gear,
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I need na spier,
An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,
Tho' I mysel' hae plenty, Tam;
But hear'st thou, laddie? there's my loof,
I'm thine at ane and twenty, Tam!

SONG OF DEATH

SCENE — A field of battle. Time of the day — Evening. The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the song.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the broad setting sun!
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties, —
Our race of existence is run!

Thou grim King of Terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,
Go, frighten the coward and slave!
Go, teach them to tremble, fell Tyrant! but know,
No terrors hast thou for the brave!

Thou strik'st the dull peasant — he sinks in the dark,
Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name:
Thou strik'st the young hero — a glorious mark!
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

In the field of proud honour — our swords in our hands,
Our King and our Country to save —
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,
O! who would not die with the brave!

KENMURE'S ON AND AWA

O KENMURE'S on and awa, Willie!
O Kenmure's on and awa!
And Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw.

Success to Kenmure's band, Willie!
  Success to Kenmure's band;
There's no a heart that fears a Whig°
  That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie!
  Here's Kenmure's health in wine;
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
  Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

O Kenmure's lads are men, Willie!
  O Kenmure's lads are men;
Their hearts and swords are metal true —
  And that their faes shall ken.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie!
  They'll live or die wi' fame;
But soon, wi' sounding victorie,
  May Kenmure's lord come hame!

Here's him° that's far awa, Willie!
  Here's him that's far awa;
And here's the flower that I love best —
  The rose that's like the snaw!

HOW LANG AND DREARY

How lang and dreary is the night,
  When I am frae my dearie!
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
  Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

For oh, her lanely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie,
And now that seas between us roar,
How can I be but eerie!

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours;
The joyless day how drearie!
It wasna sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

WILLIE BREWED

O Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

We are na fou', we're no that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth! she'll wait a wee.

THE DE'IL'S AWA WI' THE EXCISEMAN

THE De'il cam fiddling thro' the town,
And danced awa wi' the Exciseman;
And ilka wife cried "Auld Mahoun,°
We wish you luck o' your prize, man."

We'll mak our maut, and brew our drink,
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony thanks to the muckle black De'il
That danced awa wi' the Exciseman.

There's threesome reels, and foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to our lan',
Was — the De'il's awa wi' the Exciseman.

DOES HAUGHTY GAUL

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas
And volunteers on shore, Sir.
The Nith shall run to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!

O let us not like snarling tykes
In wrangling be divided,
Till, slap! come in an unco loon
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our father's blude the kettle bought,
An' wha wad dare to spoil it?
By heavens! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!

The wretch that would a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-born brother,
Who'd set the mob aboon the throne, —
May they be damned together!
Who will not sing *God save the King!*
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing *God save the King!*
We'll not forget the people!

FAREWEEL TO A' OUR SCOTTISH FAME

Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory!

Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story!
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,
And Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

What guile or force could not subdue,
Through many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitors' wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station,
But English gold has been our bane;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

O would, ere I had seen the day
That treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour
I'll mak this declaration,
We're bought and sold for English gold:
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour, and the moment o' time!

BLYTHE AND MERRY

Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben:
Blythe by the banks of Earn,
And blythe in Glenturit glen.

By Ochtertyre there grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

Her looks were like a flower in May,
  Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She trippèd by the banks of Earn
  As light's a bird upon a thorn.

Her bonnie face it was as meek
  As only lamb's upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
  As was the blink o' Phemie's ee.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
  And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blythest lass
  That ever trod the dewy green.

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
  Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
  And smile as thou wert wont to do?

Full well thou know'st I love thee dear;
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear?
O did not love exclaim "Forbear,
  Nor use a faithful lover so?"

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear,
  No love but thine my heart shall know.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me:
I said there was naething I hated like men —
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me.

He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked for Jean:
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!

A weel-stockèd mailen, himsel' for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kend it, or car'd;
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryst o' Dalgarnock;
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there?
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
  Lest neebors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
  And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
  And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
  Gin she had recover'd her hearin',
And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet —
  But, heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin',
  But, heavens! how he fell a swearin'.

He beggèd for Gudesake I wad be his wife,
  Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
  I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
  I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

COUNTRY LASSIE

In simmer when the hay was mawn,
  And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
While claver blooms white o'er the lea;
  And roses blaw in ilka bield;
Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel
  Says "I'll be wed, come o't what will;"
Out spak a dame in wrinkled eild,
  "O' guid advisement comes nae ill.

"It's ye hae wooers mony ane,
  And, lassie, ye're but young ye ken;

Then wait a wee, and cannie wale
A routhie butt, a routhie ben°;
There's Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonnie hen,
It's plenty beets the luver's fire."

"For Johnie o' the Buskie-glen
I dinna care a single flie;
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
He has nae love to spare for me:
But blithe's the blink o' Robie's ee,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wad nae gie
For Buskie-glen and a' his gear."

"O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught!
The canniest gate, the strife is sair;
But aye fu' han't is fechtin' best,
A hungry care's an unco care;
But some will spend, and some will spare,
An' wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill."

"O, gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome love
The gowd and siller canna buy:
We may be poor — Robie and I,
Light is the burden love lays on;
Content and love brings peace and joy, —
What mair hae queens upon a throne?"

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:
O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher, then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher — the nice yellow guineas for me!

Your beauty's a flower in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knowes!
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie white yowes.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest —
The langer ye hae them, the mair they're carest.

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE

Nae gentle dames, tho' ne'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my Muse's care;
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rushy, O,

I set me down wi' right good will
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Fareweel the glen sae bushy, O!
Fareweel the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O!

BESSY AND HER SPINNIN' WHEEL

O LEEZE me on my spinnin' wheel,
O leeze me on my rock and reel°;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en!
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal —
O leeze me on my spinnin' wheel.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot;
The scented birk and hawthorn white
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes' caller rest:
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
Where blythe I turn my spinnin' wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik amang the claver hay,
The paitrick whirrin' o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinnin' wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,

O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flaring, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinnin' wheel?

BUT LATELY SEEN

But lately seen in gladsome green
The woods rejoiced the day,
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in time's wintry rage.
Oh, age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again?

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

Wilt thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shalt ever be my dearie —
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shalt ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me —
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

THO' CRUEL FATE

Tho' cruel fate should bid us part,
Wide as the pole and line;
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.

Tho' mountains rise and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between;

Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

ON CESSNOCK BANKS

On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells;
Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lasses a' she far excels,
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's sweeter than the morning dawn
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her looks are like the vernal May,
When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene,
While birds rejoice on every spray;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en,

When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When gleaming sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her bosom's like the nightly snow
When pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murmuring streamlets flow;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her lips are like yon cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen;
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep:
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen;
'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,
An' chiefly in her rogueish een.

O LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS

O LAY thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass,
And swear in thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

A slave to Love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

There 's mony a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art Queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

COMING THROUGH THE RYE

Coming through the rye, poor body,
Coming through the rye,
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the rye;
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the glen;
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need the world ken?

Jenny's a' wat, poor body;
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

YE JACOBITES BY NAME

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear;
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear;
Ye Jacobites by name,
Your fautes I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame —
You shall hear.

What is right and what is wrang, by the law, by the law?
What is right and what is wrang, by the law?
What is right and what is wrang?
A short sword and a lang,
A weak arm and a strang,
For to draw.

What makes heroic strife fam'd afar, fam'd afar?
What makes heroic strife fam'd afar?
What makes heroic strife?
To whet th' assassin's knife,
Or hunt a parent's life
Wi' bluidie war.

Then let your schemes alone in the state, in the state;
Then let your schemes alone in the state;
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone
To his fate.

O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL!

O, WERE I on Parnassus' hill,
Or had of Helicon my fill!
That I might catch poetic skill,
To sing how dear I love thee.
But Nith maun be my Muse's well,
My Muse maun be thy bonnie sel;
On Corsincon I'll glowr and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day,
I could na sing, I could na say,
How much, how dear, I love thee.
I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting looks, thy roguish een —
By Heaven and earth I love thee!

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame
And aye I muse and sing thy name —
I only live to love thee.
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then — and then I'd love thee.

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, alas!
And aye the saut tear blins her ee:
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;

And by them lies the dearest lad
  That ever blest a woman's ee!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
  A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
  That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee.

MY HOGGIE

What will I do gin my Hoggie die?
  My joy, my pride, my Hoggie!
My only beast, I had na mae,
  And vow but I was vogie!

The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,
  Me and my faithfu' doggie;
We heard nought but the roaring linn,
  Amang the braes sae scroggie;

But the howlet cried frae the castle wa',
  The blitter frae the boggie,
The tod replied upon the hill,
  I trembled for my Hoggie.

When day did daw, and cocks did craw,
  The morning it was foggie;
An' unco tyke lap o'er the dyke,
  And maist has kill'd my Hoggie.

O, ONCE I LOV'D A BONNIE LASS

O, ONCE I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Aye, and I love her still,
And whilst that virtue warms my breast
I love my handsome Nell.
Fal lal de ral, &c.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu' mien
The like I never saw.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the ee,
But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
And what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,

But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul!
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.

NOTES

POEMS

Tam O'Shanter

Composed in October, 1790. The occasion of this poem was an arrangement by which Captain Grose, the antiquary, promised to include the Kirk of Alloway, near Ayr, in his *Antiquities of Scotland*, if Burns would furnish the story. Burns sent him three stories in prose, one of which is the groundwork of this poem. The poem was written at the same time. The prose version is as follows : —

" On a market day, in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway Kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

" Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the Kirk, yet, as it is a well-known fact, that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the Kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse t

observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighborhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks; and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, 'Weel looppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!' and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for, notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprang to seize him; but it was too late; nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hours of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets."

It is a pity that Burns did not continue writing stories of this character. The composition is said to have taken him one day. Kirk Alloway was a ruin when Burns wrote the poem. His birthplace is about three-quarters of a mile to the north, so that the ground and its legends must have been familiar to him from the first. Shanter is a farm near Kirkoswald, in the Carrick, or southern division of Ayrshire, and its tenant, Douglas Graham, may have been the prototype of Tam.

Line 1. **Chapman billies.** Packman fellows.

23. **That ilka melder**. That at each occasion you went to have your corn ground.

40. **Reaming swats**. Foaming ale.

61. **Falls**. Supply the relative.

63. **Race**. It has been suggested that Burns wrote "rays."

108. **Usquebae**. Whiskey. The old Irish term for the drink.

109. **Reamed**. Frothed.

116. **Brent**. Brought.

117. **Strathspey**. A highland dance.

124. **Dirl**. Rattle.

154. **Seventeen hunder linen**. The manufacturer's term for very fine linen, woven in a reed of seventeen hundred divisions.

165. **Core**. Fellowship.

166. **Carrick**. The southern district of Ayrshire.

177. **Pund Scots**. A pound Scots was equal to twenty pence sterling.

185. **Fidg'd fu' fain**. Fidgeted with eagerness.

194. **Herds**. Herd-boys.

195. **Pussie**. The hare.

208. "It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller that when he falls in with *bogles* (goblins), whatever danger may be in going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back." — R. B.

The Jolly Beggars

Composed in the autumn of 1785 The immediate occasion of the cantata was a visit to a low ale-house in the village of Mauchline, kept by "Poosie Nansie" (Nancy Gibbons), and much frequented by vagabonds. Burns was accompanied by two young friends, James Smith and John Richmond,

The poem was probably thought poorly of by its author, for it was never published in his lifetime. By Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, however, it is considered his best and most original work.

The personages of this remarkable piece are a soldier and his wench, a Merry Andrew, a trull, a fiddler, a tinker, and a ballad-maker. It is unnecessary to identify Burns with the last character.

As early as 1784 Burns had confided to his *Common Place Book* that he had "often observed in the course of his experience of human life that every man, even the worst, has something good about him;" for which reason "I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of 'blackguards,' sometimes further than was consistent with the safety of my character."

8. **Randie gangrel.** Restless, vagrant.

18. **Doxy.** A sweetheart.

21. **Tosy.** Muddled.

35. **Heights of Abrám.** The battle ground in front of Quebec, where Wolfe defeated Montcalm in 1759.

37. **Moro.** El Moro was the castle that defended the harbor of St. Iago.

38. **Floating batt'ries.** At the siege of Gibraltar in 1762. Eliot defended the fortress at the same time.

44. **Callet.** A sweetheart. Not a term of respect.

56. **Chuck.** The soldier's sweetheart.

74. **Spontoon.** A pike or halberd.

83. **Merry Andrew.** A professional jester and tumbler — a mountebank.

116. **To cleek the sterling.** To steal money.

120. **Fa'.** Lot, fate. The "braw John Highlandman" met a sad fate on the gallows.

131. **Philibeg.** Kilt.

152. **Trysts.** Fairs.

180. **And while I kittle hair on thairms.** And while I tickle hair on gut, *i.e.* while I play my fiddle.

183. **Caird.** Tinker.

212. **Kilbaigie.** "A peculiar sort of whiskey so called, a great favorite with Poosie Nansie's clubs." — R. B.

235. **The glowrin' byke.** The gaping swarm.

Halloween

Composed in the late autumn of 1785. Halloween, the eve of All Hallows (All Saints), is celebrated October 31. It is still celebrated in Scotland, but without the superstitious terror which once marked the celebration. Burns begins his annotation of the poem with the following: —

"This poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature, in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the Author with a perusal, to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own."

Note to Title. "Halloween is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aërial people, the fairies, are said, on that night, to hold a grand anniversary." — R. B.

2. **Cassilis Downans.** "Certain little, romantic, rocky,

green hills, in the neighborhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis."

5. **Colean.** "A noted cavern near Colean house, called the Cove of Colean: which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies." — R. B.

12. **Bruce.** "The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick." — R. B.

29. **Stocks.** "The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a *stock*, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells — the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the *custock*, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the *runts*, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance may bring into the house are, according to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question." — R. B.

46. **Nits.** "Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and the lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be." — R. B.

66. **Took the drunt.** Was offended.

73. **Fause-house.** "When corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, etc., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this he calls a *Fause-house*." — R. B.

89. **And in the blue-clue throws then.** "Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and, darkling, throw into the *pot* a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, Wha hauds? *i.e.* Who holds? An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse." — R. B.

102. **I'll eat the apple at the glass.** "Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder." — R. B.

109. **Ye little skelpie-limmer's face.** "A technical term in female scolding." — R. B. A minx.

118. **Sherra-moor.** The battle of Sheriffmuir, 1715, which put an end to the first Jacobite Rebellion.

124. **Kirn.** Harvest-home.

129. **He gat hemp-seed.** "Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed, I saw thee; hemp-seed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'Come after me, and shaw thee,' that is show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'Come after me, and harrow thee.'" — R. B.

171. **Three wechts o' naething.** "This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the *barn*, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger, that the *being*, about to appear, may shut the

doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a *wecht;* and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life." — R. B.

181. **Sawnie**. Sandy, the herd mentioned in line 174.

190. **The stack he faddom'd thrice. Faddom** = fathom,— measuring around with the arms at full stretch.

" Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *Bear-stack*, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow." — R. B.

203. **Where three lairds' lands met.** — " You go out, one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south-running spring or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it."— R. B.

217. **Outler quey.** — A young cow out from the stable.

219. **Maist lap the hool.** Almost leaped out of its case.

225. **Luggies three.** — " Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony, a maid; if in the foul, a widow: if in the empty dish, it foretells with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three

times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered." — R. B.

229. **Mar's year.** 1715, when the Jacobite Rebellion raised by the Earl of Mar was suppressed.

237. **Sow'ns.** "Sowens with butter instead of milk to them is always the Halloween supper." — R. B. Sowen = a sour preparation of oatmeal refuse eaten with a spoon.

The Cotter's Saturday Night

Inscribed to Robert Aiken, Esq., a writer of Ayr. Composed in November, 1785. A hint for the poem was probably taken from Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*, as that for the *Halloween* is taken from his *Hallow Fair*. The historical value of the poem is at least equal to its poetic merit, for it describes a phase of Scottish peasant life that has practically disappeared. Of course, Burns is giving us a picture of his own family life in Mossgiel. The earnest piety in this poem is strongly in contrast with the spirit of satire in the *Holy Fair*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, etc. Burns was not irreligious. It was about this time that he wrote to his father that his "only pleasurable employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way."

12. **Pleugh.** Pronounce, *plooch* to rhyme with *sough* = *sooch*.

26. **Does** = causes, used elsewhere in Burns with the same sense. This use was common with Chaucer and other early English writers.

58. **Convoy her hame.** Home, the place where Jenny worked.

93. **Sowpe.** Any kind of liquid food.

99. **Sin' lint was i' the bell.** Since the flax was in flower.

103. **Ha'-bible.** The Bible was a prized possession in every

Scotch family. Burns, too, had been raised in a home that had punctiliously observed family worship.

111. **Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin.** Favorite old church melodies.

119–135. The references to the Bible are of events related in various books from *Genesis* to *Revelation*. Burns had a fine knowledge of the Bible.

129. **Second name.** Second name in the Trinity.

138. **"Springs exulting on triumphant wing."** A line slightly altered from Pope's *Windsor Forest*.

150. **Sacerdotal stole.** Clerical vestments. Burns had the old Scotch dislike of religious exercises that appealed to the eye.

158. **Raven's clamorous nest.** See Psalm cxlvii. 9.

159. **Lily fair in flowery pride.** See Matthew vi. 28.

166. **"An honest man's the noblest work of God."** From Pope's *Essay on Man*.

182. **Wallace.** William Wallace, the old Scotch hero who withstood the conquering arm of Edward I of England, until he was finally defeated in the battle of Falkirk and betrayed to his enemies in 1305. His successor was Robert Bruce.

The Holy Fair

The "The Holy Fair" described by Burns was held in the village of Mauchline. The poem was composed in 1786. At the time Burns was an enthusiastic reader of Fergusson's poems, and the subject and spirit of this were suggested by that poet's *Leith Races*.

The Holy Fairs arose during the Cromwellian occupation of Scotland. They are so described in *In Scottish Fields* by Hugh Haliburton: —

"A 'Holy Fair' was a summer gathering of Christians convoked at some central rural spot for the purpose of religious exercises, preparatory to a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The religious exercises took place in the open air, and were continued without intermission throughout the day, while the more sacred ordinance of the Sacrament was dispensed to communicants, coming and retiring in relays, under the roof of the little adjoining church."

5. **Galston.** A parish north of Mauchline.

15. **Lyart lining.** Gray lining, the garb of Hypocrisy.

23. **Hap-stap-an'-lowp.** Hop-step-and-jump.

50. **Crowdie-time.** Porridge-time, breakfast-time.

66. **Black Bonnet.** The elder who stood by the collection plate commonly wore a black ecclesiastical "bonnet." A John Knox head-gear.

68. **The show.** Notice how Burns regards the whole service as an exhibition for which he has paid his entrance fee.

77. **Chosen swatch.** The "Unco Guid" who come in for a castigation in the poem by that name.

93. **Moodie.** The Rev. Alexander Moodie of Riccarton.

107. **Cantharidian plaisters.** A plaster to produce blisters.

113. **Smith,** with Peebles, Miller, and Russel were clergymen assisting at the service. Smith was an ancestor of Robert Louis Stevenson.

122. **Antonine.** Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the famous Stoic emperor of Rome, and author of the *Meditations*.

129. **Water-fit.** Foot of the water, mouth of the river. Newton-on-Ayr is meant.

133. **Common Sense.** The motto of the "New Lichts," or liberal kirkmen.

134. **Cowgate.** The street facing the exit from the churchyard.

145. **Change-house.** The tavern.

206. **An' gi'es them't like a tether**
Fu' lang that day.

And gives them a grace as long as a tether.

217. **Clinkumbell.** The beadle, the one who rings the bell.

222. **Lasses strip their shoon.** The lasses could not afford to ruin their shoes by walking in mud with them on. They had come "barefit."

The Twa Dogs

Composed in 1786. Luath was Burns's own dog. It was killed by the cruelty of somebody unknown, or unnamed. Cæsar is an invention introduced as a foil to the plebeian Luath.

2. **King Coil.** King's Kyle in Ayrshire. The district is said to have taken its name from Coilus, a Pictish king — probably the King Cole of the nursery ballad.

12. **Cod.** Newfoundland.

26. **Highland sang.** Ossian's *Fingal.* Luath was Cuchullin's dog in the poem.

57. **Yellow-letter'd Geordie.** The golden guineas bearing the stamp of George III.

76. **Han'-darg.** Day's labor.

95. **Factor's snash.** An allusion, no doubt, to the suffering Burns's father and his family suffered from the insolence of a factor or agent. See Introduction.

114. **Twalpenny-worth.** "A Scots pint, but Scots pints were four times as large as English pints, and a Scots penny was only a twelfth of an English one." — Dow.

118. **Patronage.** Until 1874 the clergy of Scotland were appointed by "patrons" of the churches; individuals who, as it were, owned the churches.

122. **Hallowmas.** The feast of All Hallows, or All Saints, November 1.

143. **Some rascal's pridefu' greed.** The factor's.

159. **Entails.** Nearly all the landed property in England is

entailed; that is, must pass intact to the next heir. To break ("rive") an entail is to have an act of Parliament passed which enables the possessor of a property to dispose of it as he pleases.

163. **German water.** The German spas were coming into vogue.

200. **Dizzens.** The dozens (of hanks of thread) to be spun by her.

220. **Devil's picture beuks.** Playing cards.

The Brigs of Ayr

Composed probably in September or October, 1786, and inscribed to John Ballantine, Esq., Provost of Ayr, under whose municipal rule the new bridge was building. The poem is in the plan and style of Fergusson's *Mutual Complaint of Plainstanes and Causeway, Twa Ghaists*, and *Dialogue between Brandy and Whisky.*

The old bridge of Ayr is one of the most interesting landmarks of old Scotland. The date, 1232, cut on the parapet, is probably authentic. To relieve this old bridge a new one was erected in 1786. The old bridge is still in use, and only in 1894 its foundations were repaired and strengthened. The prophecy,

"I'll be a Brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!"

was fulfilled in 1877, when the New Bridge was taken down, being considered unsafe.

12. **Mercenary Swiss.** The Swiss were accustomed to sell their services as soldiers to nearly every state in Europe. The fate of the Swiss Guards of the French Monarch during the Revolution was tragical, and from that time they have seldom been seen at foreign courts other than the Vatican.

25. **Winter-hap.** Winter-covering.

26. **Thack and rape.** The stacks of grain are first thatched with straw and then roped down.

27. **Potatoe-bings.** Heaps of potatoes covered with straw and earth against the winter.

52. **Simpson's.** A tavern near the Auld Brig.

57. **Dungeon clock.** The clock over the jail.

58. **Wallace Tower.** The other steeple. It was replaced by a modern tower in 1835.

68. **Gos.** The gos-hawk.

77. **Pictish.** Suggesting the antiquity of the Auld Brig.

82. **Adams.** The architect.

84. **Virls an' whirlygigums.** Rings and fancy ornaments.

91. **Nae sheep-shank.** No unimportant person.

103. **Ducat-stream.** A ford above the Auld Brig.

118. **Haunted Garpal.** "One of the few places ghaists still inhabit." — R. B. The streams mentioned are feeders of the Ayr.

123. **From Glenbuck . . . to the Ratton-key.** From source to mouth. Key = quay. This picture of a "spate" is excellently commented on in Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*.

134. **Stony groves.** Gothic architecture is distinguished by its clusters of columns, which are suggestive of the woods.

140. **Second dread command.** The Second Commandment forbids the worship of the likeness of anything "in heaven above, on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth."

146. **Cuifs.** Fools, the "Auld Licht" Puritans.

154. **Conveeners.** One who convenes or calls together any meeting.

157. **Brethren.** Friars of the two monasteries which Ayr supported in pre-Reformation times.

159. **Writers.** Lawyers.

173. **Weel-hain'd.** Well saved.

177. **Corbies . . . kittle.** It is a ticklish shot to fire at crows and clergymen.

202. **M'Lauchlan.** "A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin." — R. B.

225. **Courage.** The Montgomeries of Coilsfield on the Feal.

227. **Benevolence.** Mrs. Stewart of Stair, one of the poet's earliest patrons.

229. **Learning and Worth.** Dugald Stewart of Cantrine, professor of Mental Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.

The Vision

Composed early in 1786. Compare with this the *Epistle to James Smith*, page 160. The poem is Burns's acceptance of the call of the Scots Muse.

Duan. "A term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem." — R. B.

2. **Curlers.** Players on the ice with stones.

66. **A well-known land.** Kyle in Ayrshire.

80. **An ancient borough.** Ayr. Its charter was granted in 1200 by William the Lion.

92. **Race heroic.** "The Wallaces." — R. B.

97. **His Country's Saviour.** "William Wallace." — R. B.

98. **Bold Richardton.** "Adam Wallace of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence." — R. B.

99. **The Chief . . . fell.** "Wallace, laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valor of the gallant laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action." — R. B.

103. **Pictish shade.** "Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial-place is still shown." — R. B.

169. **Coila.** From Coil.

204. **To soothe thy flame.** "My passions raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet." — R. B. Letter to Dr. Moore.

221. **Gray.** Thomson, Shenstone, and Gray (except the *Elegy*) are scarcely read to-day, while Burns's fame seems to grow with each succeeding year.

Thomson (1700–1748). *The Seasons.*

Shenstone (1714–1763). *The Schoolmistress.*

Gray (1716–1771).

Burns's modesty was unfeigned.

231. **Potosi.** A fabled mine in the New World of great wealth.

The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie

Composed in the spring of 1782. "Poor Mailie (Mary or Molly) was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her last words were written. She had been purchased by Burns in a frolic, and became exceedingly attached to his person." Like Walter Scott Burns was loved by animals. "The incident is genuine. One day, as Burns and his brother were going out with their teams at noon, Hugh Wilson, a neighbor herdboy, 'an odd, glowrin, gapin callan, about three-fourths wise,' came running to tell them what had happened to Mailie. The ewe was soon released, but the ludicrous side of Hughoc's alarm and appearance touched the poet's fancy, and at the plough during the afternoon he composed this tragical-comical-historical pastoral."

17. **Keep.** Mailie understood perfectly Burns's inability to save.

Poor Mailie's Elegy

This was probably written some time after the preceding.

37. **Wae worth.** Sorrow befall. Cf. Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, Canto I.

> "Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
> That cost thy life, my gallant gray."

44. **Chanters.** The reeds of a bag-pipe.

Death and Dr. Hornbook

Composed according to Burns during Seedtime, 1785. The quack satirized was one John Wilson, schoolmaster and grocer in Tarbolton, who having become "hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine," added drugs to his store and offered advice gratis. At a masonic meeting he made such a parade of medical knowledge that Burns determined to "nail the self-conceited sot as dead's a herrin." By the satire he was driven from his gallipots, and forced to retire to Glasgow, where he prospered, not as an apothecary, but as sessions-clerk.

The title suggests the puerility of the "doctor's" knowledge. Children's reading primers were called hornbooks from the covering of transparent horn that protected the letters.

13. **Clachan yill.** The village ale.

20. **Cumnock hills.** Southeast of Tarbolton.

37. **Scotch ells twa.** 6 ft. 2 in.

58. **I wad be kittle to be mislear'd.** I would be a ticklish person to deal with if I became mischievous.

62. **Gie's.** Give us.

81. **Buchan.** "Buchan's *Domestic Medicine.*" — R. B.

89. **Play'd dirl.** Rattled.

121. **Johnny Ged's Hole.** The grave. Johnny Ged is a humorous term for the grave-digger.

123. **Calf-ward.** Pasture; here the graveyard.

A Dream

"On reading in the public papers the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep than he imagined himself transported to the Birthday Levee, and in his dreaming fancy, made the following address." — Burns's *Preface to this Poem.*

The Poet Laureate at this time was Thomas Warton, the author of the *History of English Poetry.*

Burns was advised not to print this poem in his *Edinburgh Edition* as it contained "perilous stuff." He replied, — "Poets much my superiors have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being. I set as little store by princes, lords, clergy, critics, etc., as all these respective gentry by my bardship."

4. **Wishes.** Usually pronounced as here, *wisses.*

33. **Reft.** The loss of the American colonies. A piece of string one-third as long will now go around the patched British Empire.

Address to the Deil

Composed at Mossgiel in the end of 1785. In most editions the poem is prefaced by two lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost:* —

> "O Prince! O chief of many thronëd pow'rs!
> That led th' embattled seraphim to war."

The first two lines are an imitation of two lines in the *Dunciad,* (Book I, 19–20).

"O thou, whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gullivér!"

19. **Lion.** 1 Peter v. 8.

21. **Tempest.** Ephesians ii. 2.

22. **Tirlin' the kirks.** It was a recognized part of the Devil's business to unroof kirks.

56. **Kirn.** The belief that the Devil bewitches the churn and the cow are common in Scotland and Scandinavia.

59. **Twal-pint.** Twelve pints Scots — twelve quarts.

69. **Water-kelpies.** The water-kelpie usually took the form of a horse, and, having induced travellers to mount him, plunged with them into pools.

79. **Mason.** Burns was an enthusiastic free mason.

101. **Uz.** See Job i. The reference to the afflictions visited on Job at the instigation of the Devil.

111. **Michael.** *Paradise Lost*, vi. 325.

113. **Lallan.** Lowland. **Erse.** Highland.

Address to the Unco Guid

Composed in 1786. The poem first appeared in the *Edinburgh Edition*. It is Burns's own defence against his critics.

10. **Counsel.** In the legal sense.

21. **Discount.** Discount so much of your prided purity as is due to the absence of occasion for vice.

39. **Your more dreaded hell.** They fear expense more than the punishment for sin.

Holy Willie's Prayer

"Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a

sessional process [begun August, 1784] with a gentleman in Mauchline — a Mr. Gavin Hamilton [writer] — Holy Willie [William Fisher] and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best; owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel, but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the county. On losing his process, the Muse overheard him at his devotions. Mr. Hamilton was accused of 'habitual neglect of church ordinances,' and was threatened with excommunication; he appealed for protection to the presbytery of Ayr, and (January, 1785) was successful in his appeal." — R. B.

For Burns's connection with the "New Licht" believers, see Introduction. Hamilton became one of Burns's heroes, and has more poems dedicated to him than any other of the poet's friends and patrons.

Epistle to a Young Friend

Composed in May, 1786. The young friend was Andrew Aiken, son of Robert Aiken of Ayr, to whom Burns addressed *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. The poem reads almost like a confession.

There is an omitted stanza which comes after line 48: —

"If ye hae made a step aside —
Some hap mistak' o'ertaen ye,
Yet still keep up a decent pride
And ne'er owre far demean ye;
Time comes wi' kind oblivious shade
And daily darker sets it,
And if nae mair mistaks are made
The warld soon forgets it."

23–24. **If self . . . adjusted.** Men are selfish.

40. **Sly.** Not with the bad meaning we usually attach to it, but equivalent to shrewd. Burns is giving some good canny Scotch advice.

51. **Wile.** Without its present bad sense.

79–80. **A correspondence . . . anchor.** The closing lines in Burns's *Common Place Book*, — "Let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular warm intercourse with the Deity."

A Winter Night

Composed in the fall of 1786. Burns introduced the poem with five lines from Shakespeare's *King Lear*: —

> "Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
> How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these?"

37. **Blow, blow, ye winds,** etc. A recollection of the song in *As You Like It*: —

> "Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
> Thou art not so unkind
> As man's ingratitude."

The song that begins with this line is in the conventional eighteenth-century style. That it is better than most of its kind is due to Burns's poetic genius. Even as it is, we are glad when he gets back to his natural manner, "I heard nae mair."

93–96. **But deep . . . God.** This furnished Coleridge with the closing thought of the *Ancient Mariner*: —

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small."

Scotch Drink

Composed in 1786. It must be remembered that in the eighteenth century in Scotland, as in all European countries, drinking of ale, whiskey, wine, etc., was not only general but regarded as necessary. To get drunk was a petty fault hardly worth a passing notice. Scotch butlers took it as a sign of degeneracy when gentlemen were able to go to bed without assistance. The poem must be read with this fact in view, or we are liable to get a wrong impression of Burns's character. The fact is that Burns was not a hard drinker until he went to Dumfries, 1791. He was always fond of a social glass, but more for the pleasure of the company than for the drink itself.

6. **Glass or jug.** Whiskey or ale.

17. **Barleycorn.** Scotch whiskey is almost entirely made of barley, as also is Scotch ale.

31. **Lear.** Learning personified.

45. **Meetings o' the saunts.** Holy fairs.

51. **New-Year.** It is still customary to see-in the New Year with potations of whiskey.

53. **Sp'ritual burn in.** Ardent spirits therein.

55. **Vulcan.** The blacksmith, or "Burnewin" (l. 59), as he was popularly called.

62. **Ploughman chiel.** It is still the custom for the ploughman when he comes into the smithy to swing the sledge for the blacksmith.

84. **Warst faes.** The French.

Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson

Composed in July, 1790. "This gentleman, the laird of Tunnochside, had held a captain's commission in the army,

owned some property in Edinburgh, and was living there before his death in November, 1788." — ROBERTSON.

5. **Stock-fish.** Fish cured by being dried hard.

The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie

Composed January, 1786. This poem, as well as the *Death of Poor Mailie*, shows Burns's fondness for animals. Burns had a favorite mare, Jenny Geddes, who was his companion in many an adventure, and of whom he says — "I could wager her price to a thretly pennies that for twa or three wooks ridin at fifty mile a day the deil-sticket a five gallopers acqueesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut upon her tail."

11. **Tight.** Girt for action.

22. **Fifty mark.** About $165.

35. **Kyle Stewart.** A division of Ayrshire.

44. **Stable-meals at fairs were driegh.** Horse food at fairs were not palatable to Maggie.

55. **Hunter cattle.** Horses used in hunting.

65. **Sax rood.** One and a half acres.

71. **Till spritty knowes . . . riskit.** Till hillocks covered with tough plants would have given forth a loud and crackling sound as they were turned over.

76. **Aboon the timmer.** Above the brim.

85. **Pleugh.** Ploughing team.

89. **Thretteen pund an' twa.** Fifteen pounds sterling.

100. **Fou.** Full measure.

To a Mouse

"There is no more beautiful example of sympathy with the beasts." — LANG.

Burns was ploughing with four horses, and the ploughshare

turned over the nest of a field-mouse. The creature made haste to escape, when a plough-servant made after it with a spade. Burns saved its life, and falling into a pensive mood, composed this poem just as it stands. The date is November, 1785.

37. **Thy lane.** Alone.

Man was made to Mourn

Composed in 1784. Burns called it a dirge. Much of the thought and many of the expressions in this poem were borrowed from Shenstone, Gray, and Thomson.

To a Mountain Daisy

Composed in April, 1786, while the poet was at the plough. In this poem Burns draws very near to the love of Nature shown by Wordsworth. The poem, too, is a cry of anguish for his own hard fate.

On a Scotch Bard

Composed in June, 1786. Burns had decided to go to the Indies in order to make his fortunes, and began to say his farewells to his friends. The fame which his little book of poems brought him caused the change in his plans.

33. **Jillet.** Jean Armour. See Burns's Life in the Introduction.

On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations

Composed in 1789. In his youth Grose had been a captain in the Surrey militia.

1. **Land o' Cakes.** Oatmeal cakes, Scotland.

2. **Maidenkirk.** Kirkmaiden in Wigtonshire, the most southerly parish in Scotland.

2. **Johnny Groats.** In Caithness, the most northerly point in Scotland.

12. **Cauk and keel.** White and red chalk (for drawing).

The Humble Petition of Bruar Water

Composed during a tour of the Highlands in 1787. Burns in passing through Perthshire spent two days at Blair-Athole with the Duke and his family. Athole entertained him hospitably and proposed a visit to the falls of Bruar. Burns found them "exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs." Three days later he sent this poem to Mr. Walker, the Duke's family tutor.

11. **Spouts.** Leapings.

26. **Twisting strength.** "A happy picture of the upper part of the fall." — WALKER.

34. **Wishes.** The wish was granted.

47. **Robin.** The Scotch robin is the only songbird of the late autumn. It is about the size of an English sparrow.

87–88. "**Athole's honest men . . . lasses.**" This was Burns's toast at the table of the Duke, and much pleased the family.

To a Haggis

"A Haggis is a peculiarly Scottish dish, consisting of a mixture of oatmeal, chopped meat, suet, and seasoning, boiled in the stomach of a sheep; the chopped meat is usually the vitals of the same animal." — DOW. The poem was composed in December, 1786.

2. **Puddin'-race.** Sausages.

9. **Pin.** The wooden skewer used in fastening the opening of the haggis.

19. **Horn for horn.** Spoonful after spoonful.
24. **Bethankit.** Grace after meat.

Address to the Toothache

Composed in 1786 or 1787.

14. **Cutty-stools.** Stools of repentance upon which sinners were to sit in church, exposed to the view of the congregation. Burns had been punished in this way.

To a Louse

Composed in 1786. "The success of the last verse redeems a rather painful performance. The insect was *not* treasured as a relic, like 'the flea that loupit on Prince Charlie.'" — LANG.

17. **Horn nor bane.** Horn nor bone combs.
35. **Lunardi.** A bonnet.

Lines Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage

Composed in 1788. An earlier and shorter edition had been composed some months earlier. Burns's friends had been urging him to write in English after the model of Goldsmith. Unfortunately Burns at times bent to their advice. This was written at Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell's house at Friars Carse.

A Bard's Epitaph

This was composed in June, 1786, and closed the Kilmarnock volume. It is Burns's most sincere and touching self-criticism. Compare with it the pride in *The Vision*, and the scorn for his accusers in the *Unco Guid*.

9. **Area.** The churchyard.
11. **Frater-feeling.** Brother-feeling.

Epistle to Davie

Composed in 1784 and 1785. Addressed to David Sillar, a son of a crofter in Burns's own parish of Tarbolton. Sillar and his poems have no claim on posterity except for this generous recognition of a fellow-artist. Compare with this *Man was made to Mourn*. The former is humorous and Scotch, the latter serious and English. Both, however, deal with much the same subject, the inhumanity of man.

6. **Westlin jingle**. The Ayrshire dialect.

29. **Kilns**. Malt kilns, where malt was stored in the days when people brewed their own beer. Burns looked with some relish on a life of literary and musical vagabondage, like that of the bard in the *Jolly Beggars*.

90. **An's**. And am.

108. **Jean**. Jean Armour, who afterwards became the poet's wife.

138. **Tenebrific**. A frightful word borrowed from Young's *Night Thoughts*. It is equivalent to *gloomy*.

145. **Nine**. Nine Muses.

Epistle to John Lapraik

Composed April 1, 1785. John Lapraik was, like Davie, a neighboring farmer who wrote occasionally. The song referred to in line 13 was borrowed, and altered into Scotch, from the *Weekly Magazine*, October 14, 1773, and begins:—

> "When I upon thy bosom lean,
> And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
> I glory in the sacred ties
> That made us ane wha ance were twain."

The poem is Burns's *Ars Poetica*.

7. **Fasten-een.** Shrovetide. The three days before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent; the days on which Confessions were made.

7. **Rockin'.** A social gathering. Before the invention of the spinning wheel women used to carry their distaffs or rocks with them when they went visiting. Gradually the word came to mean any social gathering of men and women where they had singing and other amusements.

8. **Ca' the crack.** To keep up the conversation.

12. **Yokin' at sang about.** A bout of singing in turn.

21, 22. **Pope, Steele, Beattie.**

Pope (1688–1744). The most famous poet of the eighteenth century.

Steele (1672–1729). The famous essayist and coadjutor of Addison in the *Spectator*.

Beattie (1735–1803). A Scotch-English poet of Burns's day, professor of Ethics and Logic in the University of Aberdeen, and author of an *Essay on Truth* and *The Minstrel*.

35. **Inverness and Teviotdale.** The northern and southern limits of Scotland.

41. **Pint an' gill.** A pint of ale and a gill of whiskey was an old Scots treat for two.

50. **Like.** As it were.

67–72. **Greek.** This contempt of academic learning seems almost excusable in a poet of Burns's *natural* genius. A classical training would have gone far to have made of Burns a mere eighteenth-century conventional poet.

79. **Allan.** Allan Ramsay. See Introduction.

80. **Fergusson.** Robert Fergusson. See Introduction.

109. **Four-gill chap.** The mug that holds four gills. It has a lid; and hence the clatter.

To the Same

Dated April 21, 1785. In this he harps on his favorite theme, his lack of envy of the rich.

67. **Thane.** Nobleman.

92. **The followers of the ragged Nine.** Motherwell changed this to: The ragged followers of the Nine. — **Nine.** The nine Muses.

To William Simpson

Composed in May, 1785. One of Burns's Theological Satires had been received with roars of applause, and had caused William Simpson, a schoolmaster of Ochiltree, to address an epistle to Burns. He replied in this patriotic poem.

13. **My senses wad be in a creel.** A proverbial expression equivalent to, I would appear to have lost my senses.

15. **Allan.** Allan Ramsay. See Introduction.

15. **Gilbertfield.** William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, died 1750. See Introduction.

17. **Fergusson.** See Introduction.

17. **Writer-chiel.** Attorney.

27. **Dead.** A noun.

32. **Poets.** David Sillar, Lapraik, Simpson, and himself.

40. **New Holland.** The former name of Australia.

45. **Yarrow an' Tweed.** Celebrated in the Border Ballads.

47. **Irwin, Lugar, etc.** Streams of Ayrshire.

49. **Ilissus.** A small river flowing through Athens.

58. **Wallace.** See *The Vision*, line 97, and *Cotter's Saturday Night*, line 182.

65. **Red-wat-shod.** A phrase admired by Carlyle in his *Essay*. **Wat-shod** = with wet feet. By the addition of *red* the poet has made the phrase terribly suggestive

73. **Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me.** Burns was especially fond of winter scenes.

88. **An' no think lang.** And not think the time to pass slowly.

Postscript. The Postscript that follows is a humorous description of the strife between the "Auld Lichts" and "New Lichts," ending with the declaration that it is all a "moonshine matter." It maybe was so with him at this stage of the game, but later he grew very earnest in his active support of the "New Lichts." The "Auld Lichts" were the rigid theologians of the old Calvinistic school; the "New Lichts," the more moderate party who admitted human culture and a more human creed.

To the Rev. John M'Math

Composed in September, 1785. M'Math was one of the "New Lichts" who defended Gavin Hamilton from the attacks of the sanctimonious hypocrite, William Fisher, "Holy Willie," and Rev. William Auld.

1. **Shearers.** Because they used sickles. The bad weather of this season destroyed most of the Mossgiel crop.

8. **Gown, an' ban'.** The canonicals of the Scotch clergy. Burns had been writing against the "Auld Licht" clergy.

8. **Bonnet.** The John Knox cap.

16. **If they ken me.** They did discover his fault, the Jean Armour episode, and he had to take his punishment on the "cutty-stool."

25. **Gawn.** Gavin Hamilton. See Introduction, and *Holy Willie's Prayer.*

To James Smith

Composed early in 1786. James Smith, a shopkeeper in

Mauchline, was "a person of ready wit and lively manners, and much respected by the poet." He was especially loyal during the Armour troubles. He was a member of the Bachelor's Club that met at the Whitefoord Arms. The poem is rich in genial humor and biographical interest.

117. **Luna**. The moon. Burns's Latin, though a source of pride to him, was a standing joke with his family.

133. **Dempster**. A Scotch member of Parliament.

134. **Pitt**. William Pitt, the younger, Prime Minister of England. **Garter**. The chief order of knighthood in England.

137. **Wit**. With the old significance of good sense.

To the Guidwife of Wauchope-House

In 1787 Mrs. Scott of Wauchope-House, Roxburghshire, had written Burns a letter in verse in which she expressed a doubt that he was

"Wi' plowmen schooled, wi' plowmen fed."

In reply Burns tells her how he came to be a poet.

3. **Thresh the barn**. Thresh the grain crop.

4. **Yokin'**. A yoking. From 6 to 11 A.M., and from 1 to 6 P.M.

10. **Rank my rig and lass**. It was the custom for a man and a woman to take a "rig" between them.

35. **The sonsie quean**. The sweet girl. This was Nellie Kilpatrick in whose honor the poet's first song *Handsome Nell* was composed. See page 240. Burns elsewhere says: "Among her other love-inspiring qualities she sang sweetly, and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme."

60. **Marled plaid**. In her letter, referred to here, she said: —

"O gif I ken'd but where ye baide,
I'd send to you a marled plaid."

Marled = mottled.

65. **Than ony ermine ever lap.** Than any one who was ever covered with ermine.

To Hugh Parker

Composed in June, 1788. Written after he had rented his farm at Ellisland and married Jean Armour.

1. **Strange land.** His new home at Ellisland.

18. **Jenny Geddes.** Burns's favorite mare. See Note to *Farmer's New Year Salutation.*

21. **Westlin.** Western; towards Ayrshire.

36. **Cast saut upo' thy tail.** Never get near.

To the Rev. Dr. Blacklock

Dr. Blacklock, a retired clergyman, blind, a poet, and one of the *litterati* of Edinburgh, was one of the first who recognized the merits in Burns's verse. This poem was written in 1789, shortly after Burns had secured a post in the excise.

5. **Want ye.** Wish for you.

7. **Heron.** Robert Heron, author of a *History of Scotland* and of a *Life of Burns.*

15. **Parnassian queans.** The Muses.

29. **Sned besoms.** Cut (make) brooms.

29. **Thraw saugh woodies.** Twist willow withes, make baskets.

To Colonel de Peyster

Composed early in 1796 when Burns realized that he was suffering from his mortal sickness. The colonel was in command of the Dumfries Volunteers at the time when France was

threatening an invasion of England. He was of French extraction, but had served as an English officer in the American war.

38. **On a tangs.** To be singed previous to being cooked.

Winter

The subtitle is *A Dirge.* It is one of Burns's earliest pieces, and was composed in 1781–1782.

A Prayer in the Prospect of Death

Composed in 1781. "A Prayer when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threaten me, first put nature on the alarm." — R. B.

A Prayer, under the Pressure of Violent Anguish

Composed in 1782 (?). "There was a certain period of life that my spirit was broken by repeated losses and disasters which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my future. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a Hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy; in this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following." — R. B.

Elegy on the Death of Robert Ruisseaux

Composed probably in 1785. *Ruisseaux* is the French for rivulets or "burns," a translation of his name.

On an Interview with Lord Daer

Composed in 1786, October. At a dinner given by Professor Dugald Stewart, Burns had his first interview with a member

of the British aristocracy, Lord Daer, son and heir of the Duke of Selkirk. Burns wrote saying he found him "nought uncommon."

12. **Hydra.** The fabled monster with nine heads.

13. **Stand out, my shin.** Take a pompous stage strut.

19. **Hogarth,** William (1697–1764). A celebrated English painter.

29. **What surprised me.** Burns's preconceived notions of rank and their effect on character are well shown in the *Twa Dogs*.

During all his life Burns met the nobility on their own footing. This largely accounted for his success in Edinburgh.

The Farewell

Composed in 1786 as he was on the point of setting out for the Indies.

7. **Bess.** His child by Jean Armour.

12. **Smith.** James Smith, to whom the poetical *Epistle* was addressed.

21. **Hamilton, and Aiken,** friends of the poet. Gavin Hamilton and Robert Aiken.

On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me

Composed early in 1789. "You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones; and it gave me no little gloomy satisfaction to see the poor injured creature escape him."

Epitaph on Holy Willie

See *Holy Willie's Prayer*, page 89.

11. **Nine-tail cat.** Cat-a-nine-tails.

On Stirling

Composed in 1787, with the title, *Written by Somebody on the Window of an Inn at Stirling, on Seeing the Royal Palace in Ruin.* Mr. Lang remarks: "As 'Somebody' had already cherished the hope of serving King George in the excise, 'Somebody' was probably 'fou' when he wrote this on a pane of glass."

Lines

This is Burns's defence of his much-maligned calling.

Lines Written at Loudon Manse

This was composed in 1786.

The Toad-Eater

One of the better of Burns's epigrams. There are variations of this recorded in Andrew Lang's edition of Burns's poems.

Epitaph on My Father

William Burns died on February 13, 1784. See the Introduction for his character. The last line is a line from Goldsmith.

SONGS AND BALLADS

Mary Morison

Composed in 1781 in honor of Ellison Begbie, the Lass on Cessnock Banks, to whom Burns proposed marriage. Though one of the poet's earliest songs it is also one of his best. In it he reaches one of the loftiest heights of pure song in literature.

10. **Lighted ha'**. The lighted hall was a barn with all of its unconventional surroundings. The **trembling string** was the violin of the rustic fiddler, the director of ceremonies.

My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose

Composed in 1794.

Afton Water

Composed in 1791 (?) in honor of some unknown heroine of Nithsdale. It is a fine example of Burns's lyric power in English. He found some difficulty in writing songs in English. He says: "These English songs gravel me to death: I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue."

Go Fetch to Me a Pint o' Wine

Composed in 1788. The first four lines according to Burns are traditional. The rest was inspired by seeing a young soldier take leave of his sweetheart on the "pier o' Leith."

5, 7. **Leith** and **Berwick-law**, on the Forth, near Edinburgh.

Highland Mary

Composed in October, 1792. For the story of Highland Mary, Mary Campbell, see Introduction. See also *To Mary in Heaven*, and, *Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary?*

To Mary in Heaven

Composed in October, 1789. On the anniversary of the death of Mary Campbell, Highland Mary, he was observed by his wife to "grow sad about something, and to wander solitary on the banks of the Nith and about his farmyard in the extremest agitation of mind nearly the whole night. He screened himself

on the lee side of a corn-stack from the cutting edge of the night-wind, and lingered till approaching dawn wiped out the stars one by one from the firmament." Finally he entered the house and wrote the lines as they now stand.

My Nannie O

An early song, composed in 1782.

Ae Fond Kiss

Composed in December, 1791. The subject was a Mrs. Maclehose whom the poet met in Edinburgh and with whom he kept up an Arcadian friendship until she sailed in February, 1792, for the West Indies. In their letters he was Sylvander and she Clarinda.

13–16. Scott says these lines contain "the essence of a thousand love-tales."

My Nannie's Awa

Composed in 1794, and its subject, like that of the previous song, is Mrs. Maclehose.

Ye Banks and Braes

Composed in 1791. There are three versions of this well-known song. The first rough copy is not given in the text. The change from the earlier and better version to the one better known was made in order to accommodate it to a new melody.

Of A' the Airts

"This song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. N.B. It was during the honeymoon." It was written in June 1788.

There was a Lad

Composed in 1785. Kyle is the central division of Ayrshire. Of course the poet here is the subject of his own song.

2. **Style.** The calendar was changed in 1751, and the year made to begin on the first of January. Eleven days that had accumulated since the calendar had last been rectified were dropped.

10. **Our monarch's . . . begun.** George II died in 1560. The date of Burns's birth was January 29, 1759.

13. **Gossip.** Sponsor in baptism.

Green grow the Rashes

Composed in the summer of 1783.

19. **The wisest man.** Solomon.

For A' That and A' That

Composed January 1, 1795. "The piece," wrote Burns, "is not really poetry." Nevertheless it is justly one of Burns's best known songs.

The spirit of this poem is not an uncommon one in literature. It is known in England as early as in Chaucer. Carried into France, it produced the French Revolution.

Auld Lang Syne

Composed in December, 1788. Though Burns affected that this song was traditional, he borrowed nothing but the title and the opening lines. The song is a reunion song.

Scots Wha Hae

Composed in August, 1793. The historical reference is to the defeat of Edward II and 100,000 English at the Battle of

Bannockburn by Robert Bruce and 30,000 Scots in 1314, and the freedom of Scotland from the English yoke. Carlyle's account of its composition finds no support from Burns's own account.

1. **Wallace.** Sir William Wallace was the first Scotchman to rise against Edward I, but he was defeated at Falkirk, and betrayed to his enemies. Readers of the *Tales of a Grandfather* are familiar with Wallace and Bruce.

It was A' for Our Richtfu' King

Composed in 1794 on the foundation of an old ballad. The reference is to the final defeat of James II at the Boyne by William III in 1689. In this battle, though his followers fought with a loyal courage, James displayed a most disgraceful poltroonery, and lost most of the love of his party.

Macpherson's Farewell

Composed in October, 1787. James Macpherson was a notorious Highland freebooter who was hanged at Banff in 1700. Except the chorus and one stanza this song is wholly by Burns.

Wandering Willie

Composed in March, 1793. An old song of the same name gave Burns the title and the first two lines.

1. **Here awa.** Go this way.

Braw Lads

Composed in January, 1793. Burns got the material for this from an old song.

3. **Yarrow** and **Ettrick** are the scenes of some of the finest Border Ballads.

4. **Gala.** A tributary of the Tweed.

Ca' the Yowes

Composed in September, 1794. The choral stanza and the melody are by Tibbie Pagan. Burns made the most exquisite poetry by rewriting the old song.

6. **Clouden.** The ruins of Lincluden Abbey at the confluence of the Cluden and the Nith.

John Anderson My Jo

Composed in 1789. The melody of this song was originally a solemn chant. In Reformation times it was quickened and fitted with a set of ribald words. From this version Burns rescued the exquisite melody. The illustration, by Allan, which accompanied this song in Thomson's work, is familiar to all — an old couple seated by the fireside, the guidwife in good humor clapping John's shoulder.

My jo = My sweetheart.

The Birks of Aberfeldy

Composed in August, 1787, under the Falls of Moness, near Aberfeldy.

O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

Written in his last illness in honor of Jessie Lewars, after she had played *The Wren* to him on the piano. It is pathetic to think of the dying poet offering to protect the lassie from the storms of misfortune, under which he had gone down, while she as a ministering angel was watching over his last hours.

My Heart's in the Highlands

"The first half-stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine." — R. B.

Banks of Devon

"These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, . . . sister to my worthy friend, Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline. . . . I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for the work." — R. B. The date of the song is 1787.

13. **Bourbon.** France. The coat-of-arms of the old French kings was the fleur-de-lys, the lily.

The Gloomy Night

When Burns wrote this song in 1786, he was expecting to sail for the Indies in a few days.

The Braes o' Ballochmyle

The Ballochmyle estate, the home of the Whitefoord family, was a favorite resort of Burns. Maria, Miss Whitefoord, sings this farewell, when the family is about to part from the property. This song was composed in 1785.

Tibbie, I hae seen the Day

"This song I composed about the age of seventeen." — R. B. Tibbie was one of the lasses who met Rab's advances with a rebuff. It is one of the poet's earliest songs, composed in 1776. Tibbie is the Scotch for Isabella.

4. **I care na by.** I care not for that.

27. **Spier your price.** Ask your price; inquire for you.

Tam Glen

Composed in 1789. It is possible that this song is founded on an old one now forgotten.

21. **Valentines' dealing.** The custom of writing names of lads and lassies on separate slips and drawing partners.

25. **Halloween.** For the Halloween observance that follows see the poem, *Halloween*, line 203.

Contented wi' Little

Composed in November, 1794. Burns refers to this song as "a picture of his mind."

Cf. *There was a Lad was born in Kyle*, lines 17, 18:—

> "He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
> But aye a heart aboon them a'."

Whistle, and I'll come to You, My Lad

Composed in August, 1793, in honor of Jean Lorimer, for some time his reigning beauty, and for whom about a dozen songs were written.

Open the Door to Me, Oh!

From Johnson's *Musical Museum.*

My Ain Kind Dearie, O

Composed in October, 1792, for Thomson.

O, For Ane and Twenty, Tam!

Composed in 1791.

Song of Death

Composed in 1791.

Kenmure's On and Awa

Composed in 1791. "William Gordon, sixth Viscount Kenmure, took up the Jacobite cause in 1715, — mainly through the persuasion of his wife, Mary, . . . and got Mar's commission to command the forces in the south. After divers ineffectual moves he passed into England, and, being taken prisoner at Preston on 14th November, was beheaded at Tower hill on the 24th February, 1716." — CAMBRIDGE BURNS.

7. **Whig.** The followers of George I.

21. **Him.** The pretender, the son of James II, for whom the Jacobites rose.

How Lang and Dreary

From Johnson's *Musical Museum*.

Willie Brewed

Composed in September, 1789, in honor of a visit Burns and Allan Masterton, the musician, paid William Nichol, the schoolmaster who guided Burns on his northern tour. They celebrated the reunion, and Burns composed the song and Masterton the air.

A sequel to this was composed by John Struthers: —

"Nae mair in learnin Willie toils, nor Allan wakes the meltin lay,
Nor Rob, wi' fancy-witchin wiles, beguiles the hour o' dawnin day;
For tho' they were na very fou, that wicked 'wee drap in the ee'
Has done its turn: untimely now the green grass waves o'er a' the three."

The De'il's Awa wi' the Exciseman

Lockhart gives an account of the composition of this song. A smuggling brig had stranded in the Solway Firth, and while Burns was waiting for assistance from Dumfries, he composed the song, while on the beach. It is said, but perhaps on doubtful credit, that Burns purchased four of the bark's cannon and presented them to the French Assembly. The date of the poem is February, 1792.

3. **Mahoun**. Mahomet. A name sometimes given to Auld Nick.

Does Haughty Gaul

Written in 1795 for the Dumfries Volunteers, of which Burns was a member. It is probable that Burns, like Coleridge and Wordsworth, changed his attitude towards the French Revolution when he saw that the liberties of other countries were threatened. At first Burns was a sincere advocate of revolutionary principles.

Fareweel to a' our Scottish Fame

Composed in 1791. In this we see Burns's poetic love of the Scots nation, and his hatred of the English House of Hanover. Burns was an adherent of the exiled House of Stewart, the descendants of the old Scottish kings.

Will Ye go to the Indies, My Mary?

Composed in 1786 when he was planning a trip to the Indies to make his fortune. Mary is Highland Mary, Mary Campbell, whom he has celebrated in some of his best songs.

Blythe and Merry

Composed in 1787. Phemie is Miss Euphemia Murray.

Fairest Maid on Devon Banks

Burns's last song. Dated at Braw on the Solway Firth, July 12, 1796. Burns had gone thither on July 4; he returned to Dumfries on July 18; on July 21 he was dead.

Last May a Braw Wooer

Composed in 1795. Burns evidently found the air difficult, for he never completed the song.

Country Lassie

Composed in 1792.

12. **Wale a routhie butt, a routhie ben.** Choose one well furnished inside and out.

Hey for a Lass wi' a Tocher

Composed in 1796. One of Burns's last songs. **Tocher** = a dowry. The tune for this song is Irish.

The Highland Lassie

Composed in 1786 when his plan to emigrate to the Indies was still in his mind. The Highland Lassie is Mary Campbell.

Bessy and her Spinnin' Wheel

Composed in the summer of 1792.

2. **Rock and reel.** Distaff and spindle.

But Lately Seen

Composed in 1794. It seems hardly necessary to think that Burns here is referring to his own premature old age. Compare this, however, with Shakespeare's sonnet LXXIII.

Wilt Thou be My Dearie?

Composed in 1794. It is probable that this is dedicated to Mrs. Riddell.

Tho' Cruel Fate

Composed in 1785. Jean is probably Jean Armour. The song seems to be completed, as it were, in " O' A' the Airts the Wind can blaw."

On Cessnock Banks

This belongs to his 1781–1782 period, when his heart was occupied with Ellison Begbie, the daughter of a farmer. " No woman," he is said to have remarked, " could have made me so happy."

O Lay thy Loof in Mine, Lass

Composed in 1796. Miss Jessie Lewars is probably the heroine.

Coming Through the Rye

In Johnson's *Musical Museum.*

Ye Jacobites by Name

Composed in 1792. Burns here seems to be urging the

Jacobites, the followers of the exiled Stuarts, to make the best of a bad cause. In that case the "man undone" is Henry Stuart, Cardinal Duke of York.

O, Were I on Parnassus' Hill!

Composed in 1788 for Mrs. Burns.

The Lovely Lass of Inverness

Composed in 1794 in the manner of the old ballads. Drumossie is the usual Highland name for Culloden Moor. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 ended on Culloden Moor when the Highlanders were defeated with great slaughter by the Duke of Cumberland.

My Hoggie

Composed in 1788 for an old air.

O, Once I lov'd a Bonnie Lass

Composed in 1773. "The first of my performances." — R. B. Nell was Nelly Kilpatrick, daughter of the blacksmith at Mount Oliphant. Burns has told us how she was the first to awaken his boyish affections as they used together to work in the wheat field. See the *Verses addressed to the Guidwife of Wauchope-House.*

GLOSSARY

A', *all.*
Aback, *behind, at the back.*
Abeigh, *at bay, aloof.*
Aboon, *above.*
Abread, *abroad.*
Abreed, *in breadth.*
Acquent, *acquainted.*
A'-day, *all day.*
Ae, *one, only.*
Aff, *off.*
Aff-hand, *at once, off-hand.*
Aff-loof, *off-hand.*
Afore, *before.*
Aften, *often.*
A-gley, *off the right line; asquint.*
Aiblins, *perhaps.*
Aik, *an oak.*
Aiken, *oaken.*
Ain, *own.*
Air *or* ear', *early.*
Airn, *iron.*
Airns, *irons.*
Airt, *point* or *quarter of the earth* or *sky; to direct.*
Airted, *directed.*
Aith, *an oath.*
Aiths, *oaths.*
Aits, *oats.*
Aizle, *a hot cinder.*
Ajee, *to the one side.*
Alake! *alas!*
Alang, *along.*
Amaist, *almost.*
Amang, *among.*
An', *and.*
An's, *and is.*
Ance, *once.*
Ane, *one.*
Anes, *ones.*
Anither, *another.*
Ase, *ashes.*
Asklent, *obliquely.*
Asteer, *astir.*
A'thegither, *altogether.*
Athort, *athwart.*
Atween, *between.*
Aught, *eight. Also* Aucht.
Aughteen, *eighteen.*
Aughtlins, *anything, in the least.*
Auld, *old.*
Auldfarran, *sagacious, old-fashioned.*
Aumous, *alms.*
Ava, *at all.*
Awa, *away.*
Awe, *to owe.*
Awee, *a little time.*
Awfu', *awful.*
Awnie, *bearded* (said of barley).
Aye, *always.*
Ayont, *beyond.*

Ba', *a ball.*
Babie-clouts, *baby-clothes.*
Backets, *buckets.*
Bade, *endured, desired.*

Baggie (dim. of *bag*), *the stomach.*
Bainie, *bony, muscular.*
Bairns, *children.*
Bairntime, *all the children of one mother.*
Baith, *both.*
Bakes, *biscuits.*
Ballats, *ballads.*
Ban', *band.*
Banes, *bones.*
Bang, *a stroke.*
Bannet, *a bonnet.*
Bannock, *a cake of oatmeal bread,* or *a barley scone.*
Bardie, dim. of *bard.*
Barefit, *barefooted.*
Barkit, *barked.*
Baring (of a stone-pit), *laying bare the stones by removing the turf.*
Barley-bree, *ale* or *whiskey.*
Barm, *yeast.*
Barmie, *frothing* or *fermenting.*
Batch, *a party* or *quantity.*
Batts, *the botts* or *colic.*
Bauckie-bird, *the bat.*
Baudrons, *a cat.*
Bauk-en', *end of a bank* or *cross-beam.*
Bauks, *cross-beams.*
Bauld, *bold.*
Baumy, *balmy.*
Bawk, *a ridge left untilled.*
Bawsent, *having a white stripe down the face.*
Bear, *barley.*
Beets, *adds fuel to fire, incites, feeds.*
Befa', *befall.*
Behint, *behind.*
Belang, *belong to.*
Beld, *bald.*
Beldams, *hags.*
Bellyfu', *bellyfull.*
Belyve, *by-and-by.*
Ben, *the inner* or *best room of a cottage.*
Benmost bore, *the innermost recess,* or *hole.*
Be't, *be it.*
Bethankit, *the grace after meat.*
Beuk, *a book.* Devil's pictur'd beuks, *cards.*
Bicker, *a wooden bowl,* or *a short race.* Bickering, *hurrying.*
Bid, *to wish,* or *ask.*
Bide, *to stand, to endure.*
Biel, *a habitation.*
Bield, *shelter.*
Bien (of a person), *well-to-do;* (of a place), *comfortable.*
Big, *to build.*
Biggin, *building.*
Bill, *a bull.*
Billie, *a comrade, fellow, young man.*
Bings, *heaps.*
Birk, *the birch.*
Birken-shaw, *a small birch-wood.*
Birkie, *a lively, young, forward fellow.*
Birring, *whirring.*
Bit, *crisis;* also, *little.*
Bizz, *a bustling haste.*
Bizzies, *buzzes.*
Bizzy, *busy.*
Black Bonnet, *the elder.*
Blae, *blue, sharp, keen.*
Blastie, *a term of contempt.*
Blastit, *blasted, withered.*
Blate, *shamefaced, sheepish.*
Blather, *bladder.*
Blaud, *to slap; a quantity of anything.*

Blaudin', *pelting* or *beating.*
Blaw, *to blow, to brag.*
Blawn, *blown.*
Bleerit, *bleared.*
Bleeze, *a blaze.*
Bleezin, *blazing.*
Blellum, *an idle-talking fellow.*
Blether, *the bladder, nonsense.*
Bleth'rin, *talking idly.*
Blin', *blind.*
Blink, *a short time, a look.*
Blinkers, *a term of contempt, pretty girls.*
Blinkin, *smirking.*
Blinks, *looks smilingly.*
Blitter, *the mire snipe.*
Blude, *blood.*
Blue-gown, *one of those beggars who get annually on the king's birthday a blue cloak or gown with a badge, a beggar, a bedesman.*
Bluid, *blood.*
Blume, *bloom.*
Bluntie, *a stupid person.*
Blypes, *peelings.*
Bock, *vomit.*
Boddle, *a small coin, a halfpenny.*
Bogles, *hobgoblins.*
Bonnie, *beautiful.*
Bonnocks, *thick cakes of oatmeal bread.*
Boord, *board.*
Boortrees, *elder bushes.*
Boost, *must needs.*
Bore, *a hole* or *rent.*
Bouk, *a corpse.*
Bouses, *drinks.*
Bow-hough'd, *crook-thighed.*
Bow-kail, *cabbage.*
Bow't, *crooked.*
Brae, *the slope of a hill.*
Braid, *broad.*
Braid-claith, *broad-cloth.*
Braid Scots, *broad Scotch.*
Braik, *a harrow to break the clods.*
Braindg't, *rushed forward.*
Brak, *did break.*
Brak's, *broke his.*
Branks, *a kind of wooden curb for horses.*
Brany, *brandy.*
Brash, *a sudden short illness.*
Brats, *clothes, aprons.*
Brattle, *a short race, onset.*
Braw, *handsome, gayly dressed.*
Brawly, *perfectly.*
Braxies, *sheep which have died of a disease called "braxy."*
Breastie, dim. of *breast.*
Breastit, *did spring up* or *forward.*
Breckan, *fern.*
Bree, *juice, liquid.*
Breeks, *breeches.*
Brent, *high, smooth, unwrinkled.*
Brief, *a writing.*
Brig, *bridge.*
Brither, *brother.*
Brithers, *brothers.*
Brock, *a badger.*
Brogue, *a trick.*
Broo, *water, broth.*
Brooses, *races at country weddings who shall first reach the bridegroom's house on returning from church.*
Browst, *as much malt liquor as brewed at a time.*
Browster-wives, *ale-house wives.*
Brugh, *burgh.*
Brulzie, *a broil.*

Brunstane, *brimstone.*
Brunt, *burned.*
Brust, *burst.*
Buckie, dim. of *buck.*
Buff, *to beat.*
Bughtin-time, *the time of collecting the ewes in the pens to be milked.*
Buirdly, *strong, well-knit.*
Buke, *book.*
Bum, *to hum.*
Bum-clock, *a beetle.*
Bumming, *humming.*
Bummle, *a blunderer.*
Bunker, *a seat in a window.*
Burdies, *damsels.*
Bure, *bore, did bear.*
Burnewin, i.e. *burn the wind, a blacksmith.*
Burnie, *streamlet.*
Burns, *streams.*
Bur-thistle, *the spear-thistle.*
Busking, *dressing, decorating.*
Buskit, *dressed.*
Busks, *adorns.*
Buss, *a bush.*
Bussle, *a bustle.*
But, *without,* or *wanting.*
But an' ben, *kitchen and parlor.*
By, *past, apart.*
By attour, *in the neighborhood, outside.*
Byke, *a bee-hive, crowd.*
Byre, *cowshed.*

Ca', *to drive; a call.*
Ca'd, *named, driven; calved.*
Ca't, *called.*
Ca' throu', *to push forward.*
Cadger, *a carrier,* or *travelling dealer.*
Cadie, *a fellow.*
Caff, *chaff.*
Cairds, *tinkers.*
Calf-ward, *a small enclosure for calves.*
Callans, *boys.*
Caller, *fresh.*
Callet, *a trull.*
Cam, *came.*
Cankert, *cankered.*
Cankrie, *cankered.*
Canna, *cannot.*
Cannie, *carefully, softly.*
Cantie, *cheerful, lively.*
Cantrip, *a charm, a spell.*
Cape-stane, *cope-stone.*
Carl, *a carle, a man.*
Carlin, *an old woman.*
Cartes, *cards for playing.*
Cartie, dim. of *cart.*
Caudrons, *cauldrons.*
Cauf, *a calf.*
Cauk and keel, *white and red chalk.*
Cauld, *cold.*
Caups, *wooden bowl.*
Causey, *causeway.*
Cavie, *a hen-coop.*
Chamer, *chamber.*
Change-house, *a tavern.*
Chap, *a fellow.*
Chapman, *a pedlar.*
Chaup, *a blow.*
Cheek for chow, *cheek for jowl.*
Cheep, *chirp.*
Chiel, *young fellow.*
Chimlie, *mantel-piece.*
Chittering, *shivering with cold*
Chows, *chews.*
Christendie, *Christendom.*
Chuckie, dim. of *chuck.*
Clachan, *a hamlet.*
Claise, *clothes.*

Claith, *cloth.*
Claithing, *clothing.*
Claiver, *to talk idly or foolishly.*
Clamb, *climbed.*
Clap, *a clapper.*
Clark, *clerky, scholarly.*
Clarkit, *wrote.*
Clarty, *dirty.*
Clash, *gossip; to talk.*
Clatter, *to talk idly.*
Claught, *clutched.*
Claughtin, *catching at anything greedily.*
Claut, *to snatch at, to lay hold of a quantity scraped together.*
Claver, *clover.*
Clavers, *idle stories.*
Claw, *scratch.*
Cleckin, *a brood.*
Cleed, *to clothe.*
Cleeding, *clothing.*
Cleek, *to seize.*
Cleekit, *linked themselves.*
Clegs, *gad-flies.*
Clink, *to rhyme; money.*
Clinkin, *sitting down neatly.*
Clinkumbell, *the church bell-ringer.*
Clips, *shears.*
Clishmaclaver, *idle talk.*
Clockin-time, *hatching-time.*
Cloot, *the hoof.*
Clootie, *Satan.*
Clours, *blows.*
Clout, *patch.*
Clouts, *clothes.*
Clud, *a cloud.*
Coble, *a fishing-boat.*
Cock, *to erect.*
Cocks, *good fellows.*
Cod, *a pillow.*
Co'er, *to cover.*
Coft, *bought.*
Cog, *a wooden dish.*
Coggie, dim. of *cog.*
Coila, *from* Kyle, *a district of Ayrshire.*
Collie, *a sheep dog.*
Commans, *commandments.*
Compleenin, *complaining.*
Cood, *the cud.*
Coofs, *fools, ninnies.*
Cookit, *appeared and disappeared,* or *peeped.*
Coost, *did cast.*
Cootie, *a kind of large spoon* or *spade.*
Corbies, *crows.*
Core, *gathering.*
Corn't, *fed with oats.*
Corss, *the market-cross.*
Couldna, *could not.*
Countra, *country.*
Cour, *to cower.*
Couthie, *kindly, loving, comfortable.*
Cowp, *to tumble over.*
Cowpit, *tumbled.*
Cowr, *to cower.*
Cow'rin, *cowering.*
Cowte, *a colt.*
Crack, *a story* or *harangue, talk.*
Crackin, *conversing, gossiping.*
Craft, *a croft.*
Craig, *the throat.*
Craigs, *crags.*
Craigy, *craggy.*
Craiks, *landrails.*
Crambo-clink, *rhymes,* or *doggerel verses crammed together.*
Crambo-jingle, *rhymes.*
Crankous, *fretful.*
Cranreuch, *hoar frost.*

Crap, *crop.*
Craw, *to crow.*
Creel, *a basket.*
Creeshie, *greasy.*
Cronie, *an intimate comrade.*
Crood, *coo.*
Croon, *a groaning* or *murmuring sound.*
Crouchie, *crook-backed.*
Crouse, *brisk and bold.*
Crowdie, *porridge.*
Crowdie-time, *breakfast-time.*
Crummock, *a staff with a crooked head.*
Crump, *crisp* or *crumbly.*
Crunt, *a blow.*
Cuddle, *to fondle.*
Cuifs, *blockheads, ninnies.*
Cummock. *See* Crummock.
Curchie, *a curtsy.*
Curmurring, *rumbling.*
Curpin, *the crupper.*
Curple, *the crupper.*
Cushats, *wood-pigeons.*
Custock, *the heart of a stalk of cabbage.*
Cutty, *short.*

Daddie, *father.*
Daes't, *stupefied, dazed.*
Daffin, *merriment.*
Daft, *foolish, sportive.*
Dails, *planks.*
Daimen-icker, *an occasional ear of corn.*
Dam, *water.*
Damies, dim. of *dames.*
Dang, *knocked, pushed.*
Danton, *to subdue.*
Darg, *task.* *See* Daurg.
Darklins, *darkling.*
Daud, *a lump; to knock.*
Daudin', *pelting.*
Dauntingly, *dauntlessly.*
Daur, *to dare.*
Daurg, *a day's work.*
Daurna, *dare not.*
Daut, *to fondle, to dote on.*
Dautit, *fondled, caressed.*
Davie's, *King David's.*
Daw, *to dawn.*
Dawds, *lumps.*
Deave, *to deafen.*
Deil, *devil.*
Deil haet, *devil a thing; devil have it!*
Deil ma care, *devil may care, no matter for all that.*
Deleerit, *delirious.*
Delvin, *delving.*
Descrive, *to describe.*
Deservin't, *deserving of it.*
Deuk, *a duck.*
Diddle, *move quickly.*
Differ, *difference.*
Dight, *cleaned from chaff; to wipe away.*
Din, *dun in color.*
Ding, *to surpass, to beat.*
Dinna, *do not.*
Dirl, *a thrilling blow.*
Dizzen, *a dozen.*
Dochter, *daughter.*
Doited, *stupefied.*
Donsie, *stupid, unmanageable.*
Dooked, *ducked.*
Dool, *sorrow.*
Doolfu', *sorrowful.*
Dorty, *saucy, sullen.*
Douce, *grave, sober, modest, gentle.*
Doucely, *soberly.*
Doudled, *dandled.*

Dought, *could, might.*
Dought na, *did not,* or *did not choose to.*
Dour, *stubborn.*
Dow, *do, can.*
Dowff, *pithless, dull.*
Dowie, *faded* or *worn with sorrow, sad.*
Downa bide, *cannot stand.*
Downa do, *impotence.*
Doylt, *stupid.*
Doytin, *walking stupidly.*
Dozen'd, *impotent, torpid,* or *benumbed.*
Draiglit, *draggled.*
Drants, *sullen fits.*
Drap, *drop, a small quantity.*
Drappie, dim. of *drap.*
Drapping, *dropping.*
Draunting, *drawling, of a slow enunciation.*
Dree, *to endure.*
Dreeping, *dripping.*
Dreigh, *tedious and slow.*
Driddle, *to play on the fiddle without skill.*
Drift, *a drove.* Fell aff the drift, *wandered from his companions.*
Droddum, *the breech.*
Drone, *the bagpipe.*
Droop-rumpl't, *that droops at the crupper.*
Drouk, *to drench.*
Droukit, *wet, drenched.*
Drouth, *thirst.*
Drouthy, *thirsty.*
Druken, *drunken.*
Drumly, *muddy.*
Drummock, *meal and water mixed raw.*
Drunt, *pet, sullen humor.*
Dry, *thirsty.*
Dub, *puddle.*
Duddie, *ragged.*
Duddies, *garments.*
Duds, *garments.*
Dung, *knocked, exhausted.*
Durk, *a dirk.*
Dusht, *pushed.*
Dwalling, *dwelling.*
Dwalt, *dwelt.*

Earns, *eagles.*
Eastlin, *eastern.*
Ee, *eye; to watch.*
E'e brie, *the eyebrow.*
Een, *eyen.*
E'en, *evening.*
E'enins, *evenings.*
Eerie, *having* or *producing a superstitious feeling of dread; dismal.*
Eild, *age.*
Eke, *also.*
Elbucks, *elbows.*
Eldritch, *elvish; strange, wild, hideous.*
Eleckit, *elected.*
Eller, *an elder.*
En', *end.*
Em'brugh, *Edinburgh.*
Enbrugh, *Edinburgh.*
Enow, *enough.*
Erse, *Gaelic.*
Ettle, *design.*
Expeckit, *expected.*
Eydent, *diligent.*

Fa', *lot;* also, *have as one's lot, obtain.*
Faddom't, *fathomed.*
Fae, *foe.*
Faem, *foam.*

Failins, *failings.*
Fair-fa', *may good befall!*
Fairin, *a present, a reward.*
Fairly, *entirely, completely.*
Fallow, *a fellow.*
Fa'n *or* fa'en, *have fallen.*
Fan, *found.*
Fand, *found.*
Farls, *cakes.*
Fash, *trouble.*
Fashous, *troublesome.*
Fash your thumb, *trouble yourself in the least.*
Fasten-een, *Fasten's-even* (*before Lent*).
Fatt'rels, *trimmings.*
Faught, *a fight.*
Fauld, *a fold.*
Faulding, *folding.*
Fause, *false.*
Faut, *fault.*
Fautor, *a transgressor.*
Fawsont, *seemly, respectably.*
Fearfu', *fearful.*
Feat, *spruce.*
Fecht, *to fight.*
Feck, *the greater portion.*
Fecket, *an under waistcoat with sleeves.*
Feckless, *powerless, without effect.*
Feckly, *mostly.*
Feg, *a fig.*
Feide, *feud.*
Fell, *the hide; keen, biting; tasty.*
Fen, *a shift, provision.*
Fend, *to keep off, to live comfortably.*
Ferlie, *wonder.*
Fetch't, *pulled by fits and starts.*
Fey, *fated.*
Fidge, *to fidget.*
Fidgin-fain, *fidgeting with eagerness.*
Fiel, *soft, smooth.*
Fient, *fiend.* The fient a, *the devil a.* Fient haet, *not a bit.*
Fier, *healthy, sound; brother, friend.*
Fiere, *companion.*
Fillie, *a filly.*
Fin', *find.*
Fissle, *bustle* or *rustle.*
Fit, *foot.*
Fittie-lan, *the near horse of the hindermost pair in the plough.*
Fizz, *to make a hissing noise like fermentation.*
Flaffin, *flapping, fluttering.*
Flae, *a flea.*
Flang, *did fling* or *caper.*
Flannen, *flannel.*
Flee, *a fly.*
Fleech'd, *supplicated, flattered.*
Fleesh, *a fleece.*
Fleg, *a fright, a random stroke.*
Fleth'rin, *flattering.*
Fley'd, *scared.*
Flichterin', *fluttering.*
Flinders, *shreds.*
Flinging, *dancing wildly.*
Flingin-tree, *a flail.*
Fliskit, *fretted and capered.*
Flit, *shift.*
Flittering, *fluttering.*
Flyte, *to scold.*
Fodgel, *squat, plump.*
Foor, *fared, went.*
Foord, *a ford.*
Foorsday, *Thursday.*
Forbears, *forefathers.*
Forbye, *besides.*
Forfairn, *worn-out, jaded.*

Forfoughten, *fatigued.*
Forgather, *meet, fall in with.*
Forgie, *forgive.*
Forjesket, *jaded with fatigue.*
Forrit, *forward.*
Fother, *fodder.*
Fou, *full, tipsy.*
Foughten, *troubled.*
Fouth, *abundance.*
Fow, *full measure of corn, bushel.*
Frae, *from.*
Freath, *to froth.*
Fremit, *strange, foreign.*
Frien', *friend.*
Fu', *full.*
Fud, *hare's tail.*
Fuff't, *puffed, blew.*
Furder, *furtherance, success.*
Furms, *wooden forms or seats.*
Furr-ahin, *the hindmost horse on the right hand of the plough.*
Furrs, *furrows.*
Fushionless, *pithless.*
Fy, *an exclamation of haste.*
Fyke, *trouble, fuss.*
Fyle, *to soil or dirty.*

Gab, *the mouth; to prate.*
Gae, *go, gave.*
Gaed, *went.*
Gaets, *manners* or *ways.*
Gane, *gone.*
Gang, *to go.*
Gangrel, *vagrant.*
Gar, *to make.*
Garten, *garter.*
Gash, *sagacious.*
Gashin, *conversing.*
Gat, *got.*
Gate, *manner, way* or *road.*
Gatty, *swelled.*
Gaucy, *large, bushy, full, stately.*
Gaud, *the plough shaft.*
Gaudsman, *the boy who drives the horses in the plough.*
Gaun, *going.*
Gawcie, *jolly, large, flourishing.*
Gawkies, *foolish persons.*
Gawn, *Gavin.*
Gaylies, *pretty well.*
Gear, *wealth, goods.*
Geck, *to toss the head in scorn.*
Geds, *pike.*
Genty, *slender.*
Geordie, *George.* The yellow letter'd Geordie, *a guinea.*
Get, *child.*
Ghaists, *ghosts.*
Gie, *give.*
Gied, *gave.*
Gien, *given.*
Gi'en, *given.*
Gie's, *give us.*
Gif', *if.*
Giftie, dim. of *gift.*
Giglets, *laughing children.*
Gillie, dim. of *gill.*
Gilpey, *a young person.*
Gimmer, *a ewe two years old.*
Gin, *if.*
Girdle, *a circular plate of iron for toasting cakes on the fire.*
Girn, *to grin.*
Girrs, *hoops.*
Gizz, *a wig.*
Glaikit, *thoughtless, giddy.*
Glaizie, *smooth, glossy.*
Glamour, *effect of a charm.*
Gled, *a kite.*
Gleed, *a live coal.*
Gleg, *sharp; cleverly, swiftly.*
Gleib, *a gleb* or *portion.*

Glinted, *glanced.*
Gloamin, *twilight.*
Gloamin-shot, *a twilight interview.*
Glowr'd, *looked earnestly, stared.*
Glowrin, *staring.*
Glunch, *a frown.*
Govin, *moving and looking vacantly.*
Gowan, *the daisy.*
Gowd, *gold.*
Gowden, *golden.*
Gowk, *a fool.*
Gowling, *howling.*
Graff, *a grave.*
Grained, *groaned.*
Graip, *a pronged instrument.*
Graith, *harness accoutrements.*
Granes, *groans.*
Grannie, *grandmother.*
Grape, *to grope.*
Grapit, *groped.*
Grat, *wept.*
Gree, *a prize; to agree.*
Gree't, agreed.
Greet, *to weep.*
Griens, *longs for.*
Grippet, *gripped, caught hold of.*
Grissle, *gristle.*
Grit, *great.*
Grozet, *a gooseberry.*
Grumphie, *the sow.*
Grun', *the ground.*
Grunstane, *a grindstone.*
Gruntle, *the countenance, a grunting noise.*
Grushie, *thick, of thriving growth.*
Grusome, *ill favored.*
Grutten, *wept.*
Gudeen, *good even.*
Gudeman, *goodman.*
Gudes, *goods.*
Guid, *good.*
Guid-e'en, *good even.*
Guidfather, *father-in-law.*
Guidwife, *the mistress of the house, the landlady.*
Guid-willie, *hearty.*
Gully, *a large knife.*
Gulravage, *riotous, play.*
Gumlie, *muddy, discolored.*
Gumption, *understanding.*
Gusty, *tasteful.*
Gutcher, *grandfather, goodsire.*

Ha', *hall.*
Haddin, *holding, inheritance.*
Hae, *have.*
Haet, *a thing.*
Haffets, *the temples.*
Hafflins, *partly;* also, *growing lads.*
Hafflins-wise, *almost half.*
Hag, *a pit in mosses and moors.*
Haggis, *a kind of pudding boiled in the stomach of an ox or a sheep.*
Hain, *to spare, to save.*
Hairst, *harvest.*
Haith! *faith!*
Haivers, *idle talk.*
Hald, *an abiding-place.*
Hale, *whole, entire.*
Hallan, *a partition-wall in a cottage, hall-end.*
Hallions, *clowns, roysterers.*
Hallowmas, *the 31st of October.*
Haly, *holy.*
Hame, *home.*
Han', *hand.*
Han' afore, *the foremost horse on the left hand in the plough.*
Han' ahin, *the hindmost horse on the left hand in the plough.*

Hand-breed, *a hand-breadth.*
Handless, *without hands, useless, awkward.*
Hand-waled, *carefully selected by hand.*
Hangit, *hanged.*
Hansel, *a gift for a particular season,* or *the first money on any particular occasion.*
Hap, *to wrap.* Winter hap, *winter clothing.*
Hap, *hop.*
Happer, *a hopper.*
Happing, *hopping.*
Hap-step-an'-lowp, *hop, step, and jump.*
Harkit, *hearkened.*
Harn, *coarse linen.*
Har'sts, *harvests.*
Hash, *a soft, useless fellow.*
Hash'd, *cut.*
Hastit, *hasted.*
Haud, *to hold.*
Hauf, *the half.*
Haughs, *low-lying lands on the border of a river.*
Hauns, *hands.*
Haurl, *to drag.*
Haurlin, *peeling, dragging off.*
Hauver, *coarsely ground.*
Havins, *good manners.*
Hav'rel, *half-witted.*
Hawkie, *a cow, properly one with a white face.*
Healsome, *wholesome.*
Heapit, *heaped.*
Hearin', *hearing.*
Hearse, *hoarse.*
Hech, *an exclamation of surprise and grief.*
Hecht, *foretold, offered.*
Hechtin', *making to pant.*
Heckle, *a comb used in dressing hemp, flax, etc.*
Heels-o'er-gowdy, *head-over-heels.*
Heeze, *to elevate, to hoist.*
Heft, *haft.*
Hellim, *the helm.*
Hen-broo, *hen-broth.*
Herriet, *harried.*
Herryment, *plundering, devastation.*
Hersel, *herself.*
Het, *hot.*
Heugh, *a pit* or *ravine.*
Heuk, *a reaping-hook.*
Hich, *high.*
Hidin', *hiding.*
Hie, *high.*
Hilch, *to hobble.*
Hilchin, *halting.*
Hill-tap, *hill-top.*
Hiltie-skiltie, *helter-skelter.*
Himsel, *himself.*
Hiney, *honey.*
Hing, *to hang.*
Hirples, *walks as if crippled.*
Hissel, hirsel, *as many cattle or sheep as one person can attend.*
Histie, *dry, barren.*
Hitch, *a loop* or *knot.*
Hizzies, *young women.*
Hoast, *a cough.*
Hoddin, *jogging, plodding.*
Hoggie, *a young sheep one year old.*
Hog-shouther, *a kind of horse-play by jostling with the shoulder.*
Holed, *holed, perforated.*
Hoodie-craw, *the hooded crow.*
Hool, *the outer skin* or *case.*
Hoolie! *stop! cautiously! softly!*
Hoord, *hoard.*

Hoordet, *hoarded.*
Horn, *a spoon* or *a comb made of horn.*
Hornie, *Satan.*
Host *or* hoast, *a cough.*
Hostin, *coughing.*
Hotch'd, *fidgeted.*
Houghmagandie, *immorality.*
Houlets, *owls.*
Hov'd, *swelled.*
Howdie, *a midwife.*
Howe, *hollow.*
Howe-backit, *sunk in the back.*
Howk, *dig.*
Hoyse, *hoist.*
Hoy't, *urged.*
Hoyte, *amble.*
Hughoc, *Hugh.*
Hunder, *a hundred.*
Hunkers, *the hams.*
Huntit, *hunted.*
Hurcheon, *a hedgehog.*
Hurchin, *an urchin.*
Hurdies, *hips.*
Hurl, *to wheel* or *whirl.*

Icker, *an ear of corn.*
Ilk, *each.*
Ilka, *every.*
Ill o't, *bad at it.*
Ill-willie, *ill-natured.*
Indentin, *indenturing.*
Ingine, *genius, ingenuity.*
Ingle-cheek, *the fireside.*
Ingle-lowe, *the household fire.*
I'se, *I shall* or *will.*
Isna, *is not.*
Ither, *other.*
Itsel, *itself.*

Jad, *a jade, a wild young woman.*
Janwar, *January.*
Jauk, *to dally, to trifle.*
Jaukin, *trifling, dallying.*
Jaups, *splashes.*
Jillet, *a jilt.*
Jimp, *slender.*
Jimply, *neatly.*
Jink, *to dodge.*
Jinker, *racer.*
Jinkers, *gay, sprightly girls.*
Jirt, *a jerk; to squirt.*
Jo, *sweetheart, joy.*
Joctelegs, *clasp-knives.*
Jorum, *the jug.*
Jouk, *to duck, to make obeisance.*
Jow, *to ring.*
Jumpit, *jumped.*
Jundie, *to jostle.*

Kaes, *daws.*
Kail, *broth, cabbage.*
Kail-blade, *the leaf of the cabbage.*
Kail-runt, *the stem of the cabbage.*
Kain, *farm produce paid as rent.*
Kebars, *rafters.*
Kebbuck, *a cheese.*
Keckle, *to cackle, to laugh.*
Keekin'-glass, *a looking-glass.*
Keeks, *peeps.*
Keepit, *kept.*
Kelpies, *water-spirits.*
Ken, *know.*
Ken'les, *kindles.*
Kenn'd, *known.*
Kennin, *a little bit.*
Kep, *to catch anything when falling.*
Ket, *a fleece.*
Kiaugh, *anxiety, cark.*
Kilbagie, *the name of a certain kind of whiskey.*
Kilt, *to tuck up.*

Kimmer, *a married woman, a gossip.*
Kin', *kind.*
King's-hood, *a part of the entrails of an ox.*
Kintra, *country.*
Kintra cooser, *a country stallion.*
Kirn, *a churn.*
Kirns, *harvest-homes.*
Kirsen, *to christen.*
Kist, *a chest.*
Kitchen, *anything eaten with bread to serve for a relish.*
Kitchens, *seasons, makes palatable.*
Kittle, *to tickle; ticklish, difficult.*
Kittlin, *a kitten.*
Kiutlin, *fondling.*
Knaggie, *like knags,* or *points of rock.*
Knappin-hammers, *hammers for breaking stones.*
Knowe, *a knoll.*
Knurlin, *a dwarf, knotted, gnarled.*
Kye, *cows.*
Kytes, *bellies.*
Kythe, *discover, appear.*

Laddie, *a lad.*
Lade, *a load.*
Laggen, *the angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish.*
Laigh, *low.*
Laik, *lack.*
Lair, *lore.*
Lairing, *sticking in mire* or *mud.*
Laith, *loth.*
Laithfu', *bashful.*
Lallan, *lowland.*
Lampit, *limpet.*
Lan', *land, estate.*
Lane, *alone.*
Lanely, *lonely.*
Lang, *long.*
Lap, *did leap.*
Lave, *the rest.*
Lav'rocks, *larks.*
Lawlan', *lowland.*
Lays, *leas.*
Lea'e, *leave.*
Leal, *true, loyal.*
Lear, *lore, learning.*
Lea-rig, *a grassy ridge.*
Lee-lang, *live-long.*
Leesome, *or* lo'esome, *pleasant.*
Leeze me, *leif* (or *dear*) *is to me; mine above everything else be.*
Leister, *a three-barbed instrument for sticking fish.*
Len', *lend.*
Leugh, *laughed.*
Leuk, *look, appearance.*
Licket, *beating.*
Licks, *a beating.*
Liein, *telling lies.*
Lien, *lain.*
Lift, *heaven, a large quantity.*
Lightly, *to undervalue, to slight.*
Lilt, *sing.*
Limmer, *a woman of loose manners* or *morals.*
Limpit, *limped.*
Lin, *a waterfall.*
Linket, *tripped deftly.*
Linkin, *tripping.*
Lint, *flax.*
Linties, *linnets.*
Lippened, *trusted.*
Loan, *lane.*
Lo'ed, *loved.*
Lon'on, *London.*
Loof, *palm of the hand.*
Loosome, *lovesome.*

Loot, *did let.*
Looves, *palms.*
Losh, *a petty oath.*
Lough, *a lake.*
Louns, *fellows, rascals.*
Loup, *to leap.*
Lowan, Lowin, *blazing.*
Lowe, *flame.*
Lowpin, *leaping.*
Lowse, *to loosen.*
Luckie, *a designation applied to an elderly woman.*
Lug, *the ear.*
Lugget, *eared.*
Luggies, *small wooden dishes with straight handles.*
Luke, *look.*
Lum, *the chimney, mantel-piece.*
Lunardie, *a bonnet called after Lunardi, the aëronaut.*
Lunt, *a column of smoke.*
Luntin, *smoking.*
Luve, *love.*
Luvers, *lovers.*
Lyart, *gray.*
Lynin, *lining.*

Mae, *more.*
Mailie, *Molly.*
Mailins, *farms.*
Mair, *more.*
Maist, *almost.*
Mak, *make.*
Mang, *among.*
Manteels, *mantles.*
Maukin, *a hare.*
Maun, *must.*
Maunna, *must not.*
Maut, *malt.*
Mavis, *the thrush.*
Mawin, *mowing.*
Mawn, *a basket; mown.*
Meere, *a mare.*
Meikle, *as much.*
Melder, *grinding of corn.*
Mell, *to meddle.*
Melvie, *to soil with mud.*
Men', *mend.*
Mense, *good manners.*
Mess John, *the clergyman.*
Messan, *a dog of mixed breeds.*
Midden-hole, *the dunghill.*
Mim, *prim.*
Mim-mou'd, *prim-mouthed.*
Min', *remembrance, mind.*
Minnie, *mother.*
Mirk, *night; murky.*
Misca'd, *abused.*
Misguidin', *misguiding.*
Mishanter, *misfortune, disaster.*
Mislear'd, *mischievous; ill-bred.*
Mist, *missed.*
Misteuk, *mistook.*
Mither, *mother.*
Moistify, *to make moist.*
Mony, *many.*
Mools, *the earth of graves.*
Moop, *to nibble.*
Moorlan', *moorland.*
Moss, *a morass.*
Mottie, *full of motes, dusty.*
Mou', *mouth.*
Moudieworts, *moles.*
Muckle, *great, big, much.*
Muslin-kail, *thin broth.*
Mutchkin, *an English pint.*
Mysel, *myself.*

Na', *not, no.*
Nae, *no.*
Naebody, *nobody.*
Naig, *a nag.*

Nane, *none.*
Nappy, *strong ale.*
Natch, *grip, hold.*
Needna, *need not.*
Neibors, *neighbors.*
Neist, *next.*
Neuk, *nook, corner.*
New-ca'd, *newly calved.*
Nick, *to break, to sever suddenly.*
Nickan, *cutting.*
Nicket, *caught, cut off.*
Nick-nackets, *curiosities.*
Nicks, *notches.*
Niest, *next.*
Nieve-fu', *a fistful.*
Nieves, *fists.*
Niffer, *exchange.*
Nits, *nuts.*
Nocht, *nothing.*
Norland, *Northland.*
Nowt, *cattle.*

O', *of.*
O'erlay, *an outside cravat, muffler.*
O'erword, *refrain.*
Ony, *any.*
Orra, *superfluous, extra.*
O't, *of it.*
Ought, *aught, anything.*
Oughtlins, *anything in the least.*
Ourie, *shivering, drooping.*
Oursel, *ourselves.*
Out-cast, *a quarrel.*
Outler, *un-housed, outlying.*
Owre, *over, too.*
Owsen, *oxen.*

Pack an' thick, *on intimate terms, closely familiar.*
Packs, *twelve stones.*
Paidle, *to paddle.*
Painch, *paunch, stomach.*
Paitricks, *partridges.*
Pangs, *crams.*
Parishen, *the parish.*
Parritch, *porridge.*
Parritch-pats, *porridge-pots.*
Pat, *put; a pot.*
Pattle, *a plough-spade.*
Paughty, *haughty, petulant.*
Paukie, *cunning, sly.*
Pay't, *paid.*
Pechan, *the stomach.*
Pechin', *panting.*
Penny wheep, *small beer.*
Pettle, *a plough-spade.*
Phraisin, *flattering, coaxing.*
Pickle, *a small quantity.*
Pit, *put.*
Plack, *an old Scotch coin, the third part of a Scotch penny, twelve of which make an English penny.*
Plaiden, *plaiding.*
Plenished, *stocked.*
Pleugh, *plough. Also* Pleu.
Pliskie, *a mischievous trick.*
Pliver, *a plover.*
Plumpit, *plumped.*
Pocks, *wallets* or *bags.*
Poind, *to seize* or *distrain.*
Poortith, *poverty.*
Pou, *to pull, to gather.*
Pouk, *to pluck.*
Poupit, *the pulpit.*
Pouse, *push* or *thrust.*
Poussie, *a hare.*
Pouther'd, *powdered.*
Pouthery, *powdery.*
Pouts, *chicks.*
Pow, *the head, the poll.*
Pownie, *a pony.*

Powther, *powder.*
Pree, *to taste.*
Preen, *a pin.*
Prent, *print.*
Prie'd, *tasted.*
Prief, *proof.*
Priggin', *haggling.*
Primsie, *demure, prim.*
Propone, *to propose.*
Proveses, *provosts.*
Pu', *to pull.*
Puir, *poor.*
Pund, *pounds.*
Pyet, *the magpie.*
Pyke, *to pick.*
Pyles, *grains.*

Quaick, *quack.*
Quat, *quit, quitted.*
Quaukin', *quaking.*
Quean, *a young woman.*
Quey, *a young cow.*
Quo', *quoth.*

Rab, *Rob, Robert.*
Rad, *afraid.*
Rade, *rode.*
Ragweed, *the plant ragwort.*
Raibles, *rattles nonsense.*
Rair, *to roar.*
Raise, *rose.*
Raize, *to madden, to inflame.*
Ramblin, *rambling.*
Ramfeezl'd, *fatigued.*
Ram-stam, *forward, precipitate.*
Randie, *quarrelsome.*
Randy, *a vixen.*
Ranting, *noisy, full of animal spirits.*
Rants, *jollifications.*
Rape, *a rope.*
Rash-buss, *a bush of rushes.*
Rask, *a rush.*
Rattan, *a rat.*
Rattons, *rats.*
Raucle, *rough, rash, sturdy.*
Raught, *reached.*
Raw, *a row.*
Rax, *to stretch.*
Ream, *frock.*
Rebute, *a rebut, a repulse, a rebuke.*
Rede, *counsel.*
Red-wud, *stark mad.*
Reekin, *smoking.*
Reekit, *smoked, smoky.*
Reeks, *smokes.*
Reestit, *smoke-dried; stood restive.*
Remead, *remedy.*
Remuve, *remove.*
Rew, *to take pity.*
Rickles, *stocks of grain.*
Rig, *a ridge.*
Riggin, *rafters.*
Rigwoodie, *withered, sapless.*
Rin, *run.*
Rink, *the course of the stones in the game of curling.*
Rinnin, *running.*
Ripp, *a handful of unthrashed corn.*
Ripple, *weakness in the back and reins.*
Ripplin-kame, *a flax-comb.*
Riskit, *made a noise like the tearing of roots.*
Rive, *to burst* or *tear.*
Rock, *a distaff.*
Rockin, *a social gathering, the women spinning on the rock or distaff.*

Roon, *round.*
Roose, *to praise.*
Roosty, *rusty.*
Roun', *round.*
Roupet, *hoarse.*
Routhie, *well filled, abundant.*
Rowes, *rolls.*
Rowte, *to low, to bellow.*
Rowth, *abundance.*
Rowtin, *lowing.*
Rozet, *rosin.*
Ruefu', *rueful.*
Rung, *a cudgel.*
Runkl'd, *wrinkled.*
Runts, *the stems of cabbage.*
Ryke, *reach.*

Sabs, *sobs.*
Sae, *so.*
Saft, *soft.*
Sair, *sore; to serve.*
Sairly, *sorely.*
Sair't, *served.*
Sang, *song.*
Sannock *or* Sawnie, *Alexander.*
Sark, *a shirt.*
Sarkit, *provided in shirts.*
Saugh, *the willow.*
Saul, *soul.*
Saumont, *salmon.*
Saunt, *saints.*
Saut, *salt.*
Saw, *to sow.*
Sax, *six.*
Scaith, *hurt.*
Scar, *cliff.*
Scaud, *to scald.*
Scaur, *to scare, timid.*
Scawl', *a scold.*
Scho, *she.*
Schoolin', *schooling, teaching.*
Scones, *barley cakes.*
Sconner, *to loathe; disgust.*
Scraichin, *screeching.*
Screed, *a tear, a rent; to repeat glibly.*
Scriechin', *screeching.*
Scrievin', *gliding easily, careering.*
Scrimpit, *scanty.*
Scrimply, *sparingly.*
Scroggie, *covered with stunted shrubs.*
Seizins, *investitures.*
Sel, *self.*
Sell't, *sold.*
Sen', *send.*
Set, *lot.*
Sets, *becomes, set off, starts.*
Settlin', *settling.*
Shachl't, *shuffling.*
Shaird, *a shred.*
Shanna, *shall not.*
Shaul, *shallow.*
Shaver, *a wag.*
Shavie, *a trick.*
Shaw, *show.*
Shaw'd, *showed.*
Shaws, *wooded dells.*
Sheep-shank, Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane, *who thinks himself no unimportant person.*
Sheers, *shears.*
Sheugh, *a trench* or *ditch.*
Sheuk, *shook.*
Shiel, *a shieling, a hut.*
Shill, *shrill.*
Shog, *a shock.*
Shools, *shovels.*
Shoon, *shoes.*
Shor'd, *threatened, offered.*
Shore, *to threaten* or *offer.*

Shouldna, *should not.*
Shouther, *shoulder.*
Shure, *did shear* (*corn*).
Sic, *such.*
Siclike, *suchlike.*
Sidelins, *sidelong.*
Siker, *secure.*
Siller, *money, silver.*
Simmer, *summer.*
Sin', *since.*
Sindry, *sundry.*
Singin', *singing.*
Sinn, *the sun.*
Sinny, *sunny.*
Sinsyne, *since then.*
Skaith, *hurt.*
Skaithing, *injuring.*
Skeigh, *high-mettled, disdainful, skittish.*
Skellum, *a worthless fellow.*
Skelp, *a slap; to run with a slapping vigorous sound of the feet on the ground.*
Skelpie-limmer, *a technical term in female scolding.*
Skinkin', *thin, liquid.*
Skirl, *to shriek.*
Sklent, *to slope, to strike obliquely, to lie.*
Sklented, *slanted.*
Sklentin, *slanting.*
Skouth, *range, scope.*
Skreech, *to scream.*
Skriegh, *to scream.*
Skyrin, *parti-colored.*
Skyte, *a glancing sliding stroke.*
Slade, *slid.*
Slae, *the sloe.*
Slaps, *gaps* or *breaches.*
Slaw, *slow.*
Slee, *sly, clever.*
Sleekit, *sleek.*
Slidd'ry, *slippery.*
Sloken, *to quench, to allay thirst.*
Slypet, *slipped, fell over slowly.*
Sma', *small.*
Smeddum, *powder.*
Smeek, *smoke.*
Smiddy, *a smithy.*
Smoor'd, *smothered.*
Smoutie, *smutty.*
Smytrie, *a number huddled together, a smatter.*
Snakin, *sneering.*
Snapper, *stumble.*
Snash, *abuse, impertinence.*
Snaw broo, *melted snow.*
Snawy, *snowy.*
Sned, *to lop, to cut off.*
Snell, *bitter, biting.*
Sneeshin-mill, *a snuff-box.*
Snick, *the latchet of a door.*
Snirtle, *to laugh slyly.*
Snool, *to cringe, to sneak, to snub.*
Snoov'd, *went smoothly.*
Snowkit, *snuffed.*
Sodger, *a soldier.* *Also* Soger.
Sonsie, *jolly, comely, plump.*
Soom, *to swim.*
Soor, *sour.*
Sootie, *sooty.*
Sough, *a heavy sigh.*
Souk, *a suck.*
Soupe, *a spoonful, a small quantity of anything liquid.*
Souple, *supple.*
Souter, *a shoemaker.*
Sowen, *oatmeal cake.*
Sowps, *spoonfuls.*
Sowth, *to whistle over a tune.*
Sowther, *to solder, to make up.*
Spae, *to prophesy.*

Spairges, *dashes* or *scatters about.*
Spairin, *sparing.*
Spak, *spake.*
Spate, *a flood.*
Spavie, *spavin* (*a disease*).
Spean, *to wean.*
Speel, *to climb.*
Speer, *to inquire. Also* Spier.
Spence, *the country parlor.*
Spleuchan, *a tobacco-pouch.*
Splore, *a frolic.*
Sprachled, *clambered.*
Sprattle, *to struggle.*
Spring, *a quick air in music, a Scottish reel.*
Spritty, *full of rushes* or *reed-grasses.*
Sprush, *spruce.*
Spunk, *fire, mettle.*
Spunkie, *full of spirit.*
Spunkies, *Wills-o'-the-wisp.*
Spurtle, *a stick with which porridge, broth, etc., are stirred.*
Squatter, *flap.*
Squattle, *to sprawl.*
Stacher'd, *staggered, walked unsteadily.*
Stack, *stuck.*
Staig, *a horse two years old.*
Stan', *stand.*
Stanes, *stones.*
Stang, *to sting.*
Stank, *a pool of stagnant water.*
Stap, *to stop.*
Stark, *strong, hardy.*
Starns, *stars.*
Staukin, *stalking.*
Staumrel, *half-witted.*
Staw, *to steal, to surfeit.*
Stechin, *cramming.*
Steek, *to close.*
Steeks, *stitches.*
Steer, *to molest, to stir up.*
Steeve, *firm.*
Stells, *stills — commonly illicit.*
Sten, *a leap* or *bound.*
Stents, *assessments, dues.*
Steyest, *steepest.*
Stibble, *stubble.*
Stibble-rig, *leading reaper, a stubble-ridge.*
Stick-an-stowe, *totally, altogether.*
Stilt, *halt.*
Stimpart, *a sixteenth part of a bushel, fourth of a peck.*
Stirk, *a cow* or *bullock a year or two old.*
Stockins, *stockings.*
Stockit, *stocked.*
Stocks, *plants of cabbage.*
Stoitered, *staggered.*
Stook, *shock.*
Stoor, *strong, harsh, deep.*
Stoppit, *stopped.*
Stot, *an ox.*
Stoure, *dust, dust blown on the wind, battle* or *confusion.*
Stown, *stolen.*
Stownlins, *by stealth.*
Stowrie, *dusty.*
Stoyte, *to stumble.*
Strade, *strode.*
Strae, a fair strae-death, *a natural death in bed.*
Straik, *to stroke.*
Straikit, *stroked.*
Strak, *struck.*
Strang, *strong.*
Strappin, *strapping.*
Straught, *straight.*
Streekit, *stretched.*
Striddle, *to straddle.*

Stringin, *stringing.*
Studdie, *a stithy.*
Stumpie, dim. of *stump, a short quill.*
Strunt, *spirituous liquor of any kind; to strut.*
Stuff, *corn.*
Sturt, *trouble, stir, disturbance.*
Sturtin, *frighted.*
Sucker, *sugar.*
Sud, *should.*
Sugh, *a rushing sound.*
Sumphs, *stupid fellows.*
Sune, *soon.*
Suthron, *Southern, English.*
Swaird, *sward.*
Swall'd, *swelled.*
Swank, *thin, agile, vigorous.*
Swankies, *strapping young fellows.*
Swap, *an exchange.*
Swarf, *to swoon.*
Swat, *did sweat.*
Swatch, *sample.*
Swats, *new ale.*
Swearin', *swearing.*
Sweatin, *sweating.*
Swinge, *to lash.*
Swirl, *a curve.*
Swirlie, *knotty.*
Swith, *swift, suddenly.*
Swither, *hesitation.*
Swoor, *swore.*
Syne, *since, then.*

Tack, *possession, lease.*
Tackets, *hob-nails.*
Tae, *toe.* Three-tae'd, *three-toed.*
Taed, *a toad.*
Taen, *taken.*
Tairge, *to task severely.*
Tak, *to take.*
Tald, *told.*
Tane, *the one.*
Tangs, *tongs.*
Tapetless, *heedless, foolish, pithless.*
Tapmost, *topmost.*
Taps, *tops.*
Tapsalteerie, *topsy-turvy.*
Tarrow, *to murmur.*
Tassie, *a goblet* or *cup.*
Tauld, *told.*
Tawie, *that allows itself peaceably to be handled.*
Tawted, *matted.*
Teats, *small quantities.*
Teen, *sorrow.*
Tell'd, *told.*
Tellin', *telling.*
Temper-pin, *the wooden pin used for tempering or regulating the motion of a spinning-wheel.*
Tent, *to take heed, mark.*
Tentie, *heedful.*
Teughly, *toughly.*
Teuk, *took.*
Thack, *thatch.*
Thae, *these.*
Thairm, *fiddlestrings, intestines.*
Theekit, *thatched, covered up.*
Thegither, *together.*
Themsels, *themselves.*
Thieveless, *spiteful.*
Thigger, *beggar.*
Thir, *these.*
Thirl'd, *thrilled, bound.*
Thole, *to suffer, to endure.*
Thou's, *thou art.*
Thowes, *thaws.*
Thowless, *slack, lazy.*
Thrang, *busy; a crowd.*

Thrapple, *the throat.*
Thrave, *twenty-four sheaves of corn, making two shocks.*
Thraw, *to sprain* or *twist, to cross* or *contradict.*
Thrawin', *twisting.*
Thrawn, *twisted.*
Thraws, *throes.*
Threap, *to assert.*
Thretteen, *thirteen.*
Thretty, *thirty.*
Thrissle, *the thistle.*
Through, make to, *succeed in proving.*
Throu'ther, *mixed, pell-mell.*
Thuds, *that makes a loud intermittent noise, resounding blows.*
Thummart, *the polecat.*
Thumpit, *thumped.*
Thysel', *thyself.*
Tidins, *tidings.*
Till, *to.* Till't, *to it.*
Timmer, *timber.*
Timmer-propt, *timber-propped.*
Tine, *to lose* or *be lost.*
Tint, *lost.*
Tint as win, *lost as won.*
Tinkler, *a tinker.*
Tips, *rams.*
Tippence, *twopence.*
Tirl, *to strip* or *uncover.*
Tirl'd, *rasped (knocked).*
Tirlin, *unroofing.*
Tither, *the other.*
Tittlin, *whispering and laughing.*
Tocher, *marriage-portion.*
Todlin', *walking unsteadily or softly like an infant.*
Tods, *foxes.*
Toom, *empty.*
Toop, *a ram.*
Toun, *a hamlet, a farm-house.*
Tout, *the blast of a horn.*
Touzie, *rough, shaggy.*
Touzle, *to rumple.*
Tow, *a rope.*
Towmond, *a twelvemonth.*
Toy, *a fashion of female headdress.*
Toyte, *to totter.*
Transmugrify'd, *metamorphosed.*
Trashtrie, *trash.*
Treadin', *treading.*
Trews, *trousers.*
Trickie, *tricksy.*
Trig, *spruce, neat.*
Trinkling, *trickling.*
Trottin', *trotting.*
Trow't, *believed.*
Trowth! *in truth!*
Tulzie, *a quarrel.*
Tup, *a ram.*
Twa, *two.*
Twa-fauld, *twofold.*
Twal, *twelve.*
Twalt, *the twelfth.*
Twa-three, *two or three.*
Twang, *twinge.*
Twined, *reft, separated from.*
Twins, *bereaves, takes away from.*
Twistle, *a twist.*
Tyke, *a dog, a cur.*
Tyne, *to lose.*
Tysday'teen, *Tuesday at evening.*

Unchancy, *dangerous.*
Unco, *very, great, extreme, strange.*
Uncos, *strange things, news of the country-side.*
Unkenn'd, *unknown.*
Unsicker, *unsecure.*
Unskaith'd, *unhurt.*

Upo', *upon.*
Upon't, *upon it.*

Vap'rin, *vaporing.*
Vauntie, *proud, in high spirits.*
Vera, *very.*
Viewin, *viewing.*
Virls, *rings.*
Vittel, *victual, grain.*
Vittle, *victual.*
Vogie, *proud, well-pleased.*
Vow, *an interjection of admiration or surprise.*

Wa', *a wall.*
Wab, *a web.*
Wabster, *a weaver.*
Wad, *would; a wager; to wed.*
Wad a haen, *would have had.*
Wadna, *would not.*
Wae, *sorrowful.*
Wae days, *woful days.*
Waefu', *woful.*
Waes me, *woe's me.*
Waesucks! *alas!*
Wae worth, *woe befall.*
Wa'-flower, *the wallflower.*
Waft, *the cross thread that goes from the shuttle through the web.*
Waifs, *stray sheep.*
Wair't, *spend it.*
Wal'd, *chose.*
Wale, *choice.*
Walie, *ample, large.*
Wallop in a tow, *to hang one's self.*
Wame, *the belly.*
Wamefou, *bellyful.*
Wan, *did win, earned.*
Wanchancie, *unlucky.*
Wanrestfu', *restless.*
War'd, *spent, bestowed.*
Ware, *to spend.*
Wark, *work.*
Wark-lume, *tool.*
Warks, *works.*
Warld, *world.*
Warlock, *a wizard.*
Warly, *worldly.*
Warran', *warrant.*
Warsle, *to wrestle.*
Warst, *worst.*
Warstl'd, *wrestled.*
Wasna, *was not.*
Wast, *west.*
Wastrie, *prodigality, riot.*
Wat, *wet; wot, know.*
Waterbrose, *meal and water.*
Wat na, *wot not.*
Wattle, *twisted wands.*
Wauble, *to wabble.*
Waught, *a big drink.*
Waukening, *awakening.*
Waukens, *wakens.*
Waukit, *thickened with toil.*
Waukrife, *wakeful.*
Wauks, *awakes.*
Waur, *to fight, to defeat; worse.*
Waur't, *worsted.*
Weans, *children.*
Weason, *the weasand, throat.*
Wee, *little.*
A wee, *a short period of time.*
A wee a-back, *a small space behind.*
Weel, *well.*
Weel-gaun, *well-going.*
Weel-kent, *well-known.*
Weet, *wet.*
We'se, *we shall* or *will.*
Westlin, *western.*
Wha, *who.*
Wha e'er, *whoever.*

Whaizle, *to wheeze.*
Whalpit, *whelped.*
Wham, *whom.*
Whan, *when.*
Whang, *a large slice.*
Whar, *where.*
Wha's, *whose.*
Whase, *whose.*
Whatfor no? *for what reason not?*
Whatt, *did whet* or *cut.*
Whaup, *a curlew.*
Whaur'll, *where will.*
Whid, *fib, rapid movement.*
Whiddin, *running as a hare.*
Whigmaleeries, *crotchets.*
Whingin', *crying, complaining, fretting.*
Whins, *furze bushes.*
Whirlygigums, *useless ornaments.*
Whisht, *peace.*
Whiskit, *whisked.*
Whissle, *whistle.*
Whistle, *the throat.*
Whitter, *a hearty draught of liquor.*
Whittle, *knife.*
Whun-stane, *whinstone, granite.*
Whup, *a whip.*
Whyles, *sometimes.*
Wi', *with.*
Widdle, *a struggle* or *bustle.*
Wiel, *a small whirlpool.*
Wifie, dim. of *wife.*
Wight, *strong, powerful.*
Wil' cat, *the wild cat.*
Willow wicker, *the smaller species of willow.*
Willyart, *wild, strange.*
Wimplin, *flowing, meandering.*
Wimpl't, *wimpled.*
Win', *wind.*
Winkin, *winking.*
Winna, *will not.*
Winnock-bunker, *a seat in a window.*
Winnocks, *windows.*
Wins, *winds.*
Win't, *did wind.*
Wintle, *a staggering motion, stagger.*
Wintles, *struggles.*
Winze, *a curse.*
Wiss, *wish.*
Witha', *withal.*
Withoutten, *without.*
Wonner, *a wonder.*
Wons, *dwells.*
Woo', *wool.*
Woodie, *the gallows, a withe.*
Wooer-babs, *garters tied above the calf of the leg with two loops.*
Wordie, dim. of *word.*
Wordy, *worthy.*
Worl', *world.*
Worset, *worsted.*
Wow, *an exclamation of surprise or wonder.*
Wrang, *wrong.*
Wreeths, *wreaths.*
Wud, *mad.*
Wumble, *a wimble* or *auger.*
Wyle, *to beguile, to decoy.*
Wyliecoat, *a flannel vest.*
Wyling, *beguiling.*
Wyte, *to blame.*

Yard, *a garden.*
Yealings, *coevals.*
Yell, *barren, giving no milk.*
Yerd, *yard.*
Yerket, *jerked, lashed.*
Yerl, *an earl.*
Ye'se, *you shall* or *will.*

Yestreen, *yesternight.*
Yetts, *gates.*
Yeukin, *itching.*
Yeuks, *itches.*
Yill, *ale.*
Yill-caup, *ale-mug.*
Yird, *earth.*
Yirth, *the earth.*
Yokin, *yoking, a bout, a set to.*
Yont, *beyond.*
Yoursel, *yourselves, yourself.*
Yowes, *ewes.*
Yowie, *pet ewe.*
Yule, *Christmas.*

INDEX TO FIRST LINES

A guid New Year I wish thee, Maggie! 108
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever! 191
An' O for ane an' twenty, Tam! 216
As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither 69
Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms . . . 228
A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink 120

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows 190
Blythe, blythe and merry was she 223
Bonnie lassie, will ye go 206
Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes 203
But lately seen in gladsome green 231

Ca' the yowes to the knowes 204
Coming through the rye, poor body 236
Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair 213

Dear Smith, the sleeest paukie thief 160
Does haughty Gaul invasion threat? 220

Fair fa' your honest sonsie face 127
Fairest maid on Devon banks 224
Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame 221
Farewell, old Scotia's bleak domains 179
Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies . 217
Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong 202
Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes . . 186

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine 187
Green grow the rashes O 196
Guid-mornin' to your Majesty! 79

Ha! wh'are ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie! 130
Hear, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots 122
Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie 203
Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay 181
Here Stuarts once in glory reign'd 182
How lang and dreary is the night 218
How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon . 208

I gat your letter, winsome Willie 150
I lang hae thought, my youthfu' friend 93
I mind it weel, in early date 167
In simmer when the hay was mawn 226
In this strange land, this uncouth clime . . . 169
Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art . . . 180
Is there a whim-inspirèd fool 134
Is there, for honest poverty 197
It was a' for our rightfu' King 200

John Anderson my jo, John 205

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose 71
Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen . . 225
Let other Poets raise a fracas 99

My curse upon your venom'd stang 129
My heart is a breaking, dear Tittie 212
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here . . 207
My honour'd Colonel, deep I feel 173
My Lord, I know your noble ear 124
My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend! . . 29
My love is like a red red rose 185

Nae gentle dames, tho' ne'er sae fair 228
Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays . . 192
Now Robin lies in his last lair 177

O Death! thou tyrant fell and bloody! 103
O Kenmure's on and awa, Willie! 217
O lay thy loof in mine, lass 235
O leeze me on my spinnin' wheel 230

O Mary, at thy window be 184
O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass 240
Oh, open the door, some pity to shew 214
O Thou great Being! what Thou art 176
O Thou unknown Almighty Cause 175
O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell 89
O thou! whatever title suit thee 82
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day 210
O, were I on Parnassus' hill 237
O, wert thou in the cauld blast 207
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad 214
O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut 219
O ye wha are sae guid yoursel 87
O ye, whose cheek the tear of pity stains . . . 183
Of a' the airts the wind can blaw 194
On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells 233

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled 199
Should auld acquaintance be forgot 198
Some books are lies frae end to end 73

The Catrine woods were yellow seen 210
The De'il cam fiddling thro' the town 220
The gloomy night is gathering fast 209
The lovely lass o' Inverness 238
The night was still, and o'er the hill 183
The simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough . . . 52
The sun had closed the winter day 60
The wintry wast extends his blast 174
There was a lad was born in Kyle 195
This wot ye all whom it concerns 178
Tho' cruel fate should bid us part 232
Thou lingering star, with lessening ray 188
Thou whom chance may hither lead 132
'Twas in that place o' Scotland's Isle 43

Upon a simmer Sunday morn 35
Upon that night, when fairies light 20

Wee modest crimson-tippèd flow'r 118
Wee sleekit cow'rin' tim'rous beastie 113

What of earls with whom you have supt 183
What will I do gin my Hoggie die? 239
When biting Boreas, fell and doure 96
When chapman billies leave the street 1
When chill November's surly blast 115
When lyart leaves bestrow the yird 8
When o'er the hill the eastern star 215
While at the stook the shearers cow'r 157
While briers an' woodbines budding green . . . 141
While new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake 146
While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw 135
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary 222
Wilt thou be my dearie? 232
Wow, but your letter made me vauntie! 171

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around . . . 187
Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon 193
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear . . 236
Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering . . 182

INDEX TO NOTES

Aboon the timmer, 265.
A correspondence . . . anchor, 263.
Adams, 256.
Aikin, 276.
An ancient borough, 257.
And in the blue-clue throws then, 249.
And while I kittle hair on thairms, 247.
An' gi'es them't like a tether, 253.
An honest man, etc, 252.
An' no think lang, 272.
An's, 269.
Antonine, 253.
Area, 268.
Athole's honest men, 267.

Barleycorn, 264.
Beattie, 270.
Benevolence, 257.
Berwick-law, 278.
Bess, 276.
Black Bonnet, 253.
Blow, blow, ye winds, 263.
Bold Richardton, 257.
Bonnet, 272.
Bourbon, 283.
Brent, 245.
Brethren, 256.
Bruce, 248.
Buchan, 259.
But deep . . . God, 263.

Caird, 247.
Calf-ward, 260.
Callet, 246.
Cantharidian plaisters, 253.
Carrick, 245.
Cassilis Downans, 247.
Cast saut upo' thy tail, 274.
Ca' the crack, 270.
Cauk and keel, 267.
Change-house, 253.
Chanters, 259.
Chapman billies, 244.
Chief . . . fell, 257.
Chosen swatch, 253.
Chuck, 246.
Clachan yill, 259.
Clinkumbell, 254.
Cod, 254.
Coila, 258.
Colean, 248.
Common Sense, 253.
Conveeners, 256.
Convoy her hame, 251.
Corbies . . . kittle, 256.
Core, 245.
Counsel, 261.
Courage, 257.
Cowgate, 253.

Crowdie-time, 253.
Cuifs, 256.
Cumnock hills, 259.
Curlers, 257.
Cutty-stools, 268.

Dead, 271.
Dempster, 273.
Devil's picture beuks, 255.
Dirl, 245.
Discount, 261.
Dizzens, 255.
Does, 251.
Doxy, 246.
Duan, 257.
Ducat-stream, 256.
Dundee, 252.
Dungeon clock, 256.

Elgin, 252.
Entails, 254.
Ettrick, 281.
Ev'n winter . . . charms for me, 272.

Fa', 246.
Factor's snash, 254.
Falls, 245.
Fasten-een, 270.
Fause-house, 248.
Fergusson, 270, 271.
Fidg'd fu' fain, 245.
Fifty mark, 265.
Floating batt'ries, 246.
Followers of the ragged Nine, 271.
Fou, 265.
Four-gill chap, 270.
Frater-feeling, 268.
From Glenbuck . . . Rattonkey, 256.

Gala, 282.
Galston, 253.
Garter, 273.
Gawn, 272.
German water, 255.
Gie's, 259.
Gilbertfield, 271.
Glass or jug, 264.
Glowrin' byke, 247.
Gossip, 280.
Gown an' ban', 272.
Gray, 258.
Greek, 270.

Ha'-bible, 251.
Halloween, 284.
Hallowmas, 254.
Hamilton, 276.
Han'-darg, 254.
Hap-stap-an'-lowp, 253.
Haunted Garpal, 256.
He gat hemp-seed, 249.
Heights of Abrám, 246.
Herds, 245.
Here awa, 281.
Heron, 274.
Highland sang, 254.
Him, 285.
His Country's Saviour, 257.
Hogarth, 276.
Horn for horn, 268.
Horn nor bane, 268.
Hunter cattle, 265.
Hydra, 276.

I care na by, 283.
If self . . . adjusted, 263.
If they ken me, 272.
I'll eat the apple at the glass, 249.

Ilissus, 271.
Inverness, 270.
I wad be kittle to be mislear'd, 259.

Jean, 269.
Jenny Geddes, 274.
Jillet, 266.
Johnny Ged's Hole, 260.
Johnny Groats, 267.

Keep, 258.
Kilbaigie, 247.
Kilns, 269.
King Coil, 254.
Kirn, 249, 261.
Kyle Stewart, 265.

Lallan, 261.
Land o' Cakes, 266.
Lasses strip their shoon, 254.
Lear, 264.
Learning and Worth, 257.
Leith, 278.
Lighted ha', 278.
Like, 270.
Lily fair in flowery pride, 252.
Lion, 261.
Luggies three, 250.
Luna, 273.
Lunardi, 268.
Lyart lining, 253.

McLauchlan, 257.
Mahoun, 286.
Maidenkirk, 266.
Maist lap the hool, 250.
Marled plaid, 273.
Mar's year, 251.
Martyrs, 252.
Mason, 261.
Meetings o' the saunts, 264.
Mercenary Swiss, 255.
Merry Andrew, 246.
Michael, 261.
Moodie, 253.
Moro, 246.
My jo, 282.
My senses wad be in a creel, 271.

New Holland, 271.
New Year, 264.
Nine, 269, 271.
Nine-tail cat, 276.
Nits, 248.

On a tangs, 275.
Ony ermine ever lap, 274.
Our monarch's . . . begun, 280
Outler quey, 250.

Parnassian queans, 274.
Patronage, 254.
Philibeg, 247.
Pictish, 256.
Pictish shade, 257.
Pin, 267.
Pint an' gill, 270.
Pitt, 273.
Play'd dirl, 259.
Pleugh, 251, 265.
Ploughman chiel, 264.
Poets, 271.
Pope, 270.
Potosi, 258.
Potatoe-bings, 256.
Puddin'-race, 267.
Pund Scots, 245.
Pussie, 245.

Race, 245.
Race heroic, 257.
Ramsay, Allan, 270, 271.
Randie gangrel, 246.
Rank my rig and lass, 273.
Raven's clamorous nest, 252.
Reamed, 245.
Reaming swats, 245.
Red-wat-shod, 271.
Reft, 260.
Robin, 267.
Rock and reel, 287.
Rockin', 270.

Sacerdotal stole, 252.
Sawnie, 250.
Sax rood, 265.
Second dread command, 256.
Second name, 252.
Seventeen hunder linen, 245.
Shearers, 272.
Shenstone, 258.
Sherra-moor, 249.
Show, 253.
Simpsons, 256.
Sin' lint was i' the bell, 251.
Sly, 263.
Smith, 253, 276.
Sned besoms, 274.
Some rascals' pridefu' greed, 254.
Sonsie quean, 273.
Sow'ns, 251.
Sowpe, 251.
Spier your price, 283.
Spontoon, 246.
Spouts, 267.
Springs exulting on triumphant wing, 252.
Sp'ritual burn in, 264.
Stable-meals . . . were driegh, 265.
Stack he faddom'd thrice, 250.
Stand out, my shin, 276.
Steele, 270.
Stock-fish, 265.
Stocks, 248.
Stony groves, 256.
Strange land, 274.
Strathspey, 245.
Style, 280.

Tempest, 261.
Tenebrific, 269.
Teviotdale, 270.
Tight, 265.
Till spritty knowes, 265.
Tirlin' the kirks, 261.
Thack and rape, 255.
Thane, 271.
That ilka melder, 245.
Thomson, 258.
Thraw saugh woodies, 274.
Three wechts o' naething, 249.
Thresh the barn, 273.
Thretteen pund an' twa, 265.
Thy lane, 266.
Tocher, 287.
To cleek the sterling, 246.
Took the drunt, 248.
To soothe thy flame, 258.
Tosy, 246.
Trysts, 247.
Twalpenny-worth, 254.
Twal-pint, 261.
Tweed, 271.
Twisting strength, 267.

Usquebae, 245.
Uz, 261.

Valentines' dealing, 284.
Virls an' whirlygigums, 256.

Wae worth, 259.
Wale a routhie butt, 287.
Wallace, 252, 271, 281.
Wallace Tower, 256.
Want ye, 274.
Warst faes, 264.
Water-fit, 253.
Water-kelpies, 261.
Weel-hain'd, 256.
Well known land, 257.
Westlin, 274.
Westlin-jingle, 269.
What surprised me, 276.
Where three lairds' lands met, 250.
Whig, 285.
Wile, 263.
Winter-hap, 255.
Wisest man, 280.
Wishes, 260, 267.
Wit, 273.
Writer-chiel, 271.
Writers, 256.

Yarrow, 271, 281.
Ye little skelpie-limmer's face, 249.
Yellow-letter'd Geordie, 254.
Yokin', 273.
Yokin' at sang about, 270.
Your more dreaded hell, 261.